

Black River Local School District
Proud Members of the Black River Community
Albion, Cinnamon Lake, Homerville, Huntington, Spencer & Sullivan

Athletic Handbook
2021-2022

A Member of the OHSAA
and
The Lorain County Eight Conference
LC8



Board Approved: July 15, 2021

Home of the Pirates

Welcome & Introduction

Welcome to the Black River Local Schools athletic program! We are very excited that you have decided to make a commitment to represent Black River through your athletic participation. By joining a sports team, you become an integral part of the athletic program and undertake a task inherent with scrutiny, sacrifice, dedication, selflessness and hard work. We look forward to seeing your unique talents and abilities to further the Pirate traditions.

To ensure that the Black River community has a quality athletic program of which it can always be proud, the District and Athletic Department have developed rules, regulations and guidelines to help maintain the high standards of excellence expected from students involved in athletics. It is our hope that this handbook will provide, students, parents/guardians and coaches with the information necessary to excel within the athletic program.

We wish each and every one of our students, parent/guardians and coaches the best of success as they compete this year. ***GO PIRATES!!!***

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Sportsmanship is *Everyone's* Responsibility!

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Black River Athletic Department

Mission

The Athletic Department of Black River Local Schools will provide a wide variety of athletic opportunities that will aid in the academic and overall development of our students. We are dedicated to conducting all activities with honesty and integrity in accordance with the principles of good sportsmanship and ethical conduct.

Philosophy

As a member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the Lorain County Eight Conference (LC8), the Black River Local School District is dedicated to excellence in both academics and athletics and believes that a dynamic program of student activities is vital to the overall development of each student. Interscholastic athletics are an integral part of this district's total educational program. In addition to intellectual development it is important to provide opportunities outside of the typical classroom setting. Participation in a sound athletic program contributes to the complete and full development of the student. An athletic program teaches the participants the value of cooperation and the need for teamwork, as well as the spirit of competition, which is so important in our society. Learning to properly handle victory and defeat, as well as, complying with the rules of the game, are all characteristics of a mature, responsible citizen. A quality athletic experience will go a long way to help our students learn the values needed to become a successful member of society. The staff will promote dedication, hard work, sportsmanship, integrity, and discipline to help instill a sense of pride and tradition in Pirate athletics, the Black River community, school and to enable each student to work toward his/her ultimate potential.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

The following statements represent the objectives to guide the evaluation of success of an athletic program. The degree of success will be based on the values learned and how our coaches and athletes represent Black River Local Schools. They will not be judged on the number of wins and losses, awards received, or the number of seats sold for a contest.

1. To provide all students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills through approved interscholastic athletics.
2. To provide a broad athletic program, in conjunction with dedicated directors and coaches who will carry out the Board of Education's philosophy and objectives, placing the educational, physical, and psychological needs of the student athlete above all other interests.
3. To develop habits, values and attitudes in our student athletes that will lead to success in school and later in life.
4. To develop a positive concept of self and self-reliance.
5. To establish open lines of communication for all parts of the athletic program, school and community.
6. To set high standards of sportsmanship and integrity for our coaches, athletes, spectators, school and community.
7. To provide proper health and medical supervision, proper uniforms and equipment, and athletic facilities which meet all safety standards for all parts of the athletic program.
8. An extracurricular activity will exist only as long as it can be justified by sound educational reasoning, sufficient participation and funding.
9. In varsity competition the head coach will field those student athletes that in his or her opinion, will most effectively contribute to the success of the program. The head coach shall determine the optimum number of student athletes on a varsity team.
10. We will remember that above all, interscholastic competition is a game. As such, we will always strive to have fun & enjoy our time with friends and family!

Student-athletes are representing Black River Local Schools. They will be held to the standards of both the **Athletic Code of Excellence** and the **Student Code of Excellence**. Participation in athletics is important but is an extension of the classroom. The student-athlete must be aware of their choices and any consequence that may come with it. We are proud of your participation in athletics and your success in the classroom. Set your goals and strive to achieve them in both athletics and academics.

The Lorain County Eight Conference

Black River is a member of the Lorain County Eight Conference (LC8). Members of the LC8 include: Black River, Brookside, Firelands, Keystone, Wellington, Clearview, Columbia, and Oberlin. League policies will govern Black River athletics where they are applicable, athletics will be governed by the Black River Board of Education.

Black River High School currently participates at the varsity level in the following sports:

Baseball	Boys' Cross Country	Softball
Boys Basketball	Girls' Cross Country	Boys' Track
Girls Basketball	Football	Girls' Track
Bowling	Golf	Volleyball
Cheerleading		Wrestling

Black River Middle School currently participates in the following sports:

Boys' Basketball	Boys' Cross Country	Girls' Track
Girls' Basketball	Girls' Cross Country	Volleyball
Cheerleading	Football	Wrestling
Boys' Track		

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is behavior characterized by generosity, a genuine concern for others, following accepted rules & regulations and acting with respect and integrity at all times. The ideals of sportsmanship, ethical behavior and integrity permeate our culture as these values of good citizenship and high behavioral standards apply equally to all disciplines. Black River views good sportsmanship as a concrete measure of this understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

Spectators are to demonstrate positive enthusiasm without causing harm, danger or embarrassment to the team, school, or others in attendance by showing respect towards all players, coaches, officials, and fans as well as showing pride & respect for their school. Students are reminded that the majority of school rules are still in effect at after-school events & that disciplinary action may be taken for actions at athletic events. All spectators are reminded that failure to follow guidelines, or failure to comply with the directions of game or school officials, will be cause for ejection from the contest without refund.

Ticket Prices

Ticket prices for all athletic events are established by the LC8.

Current ticket prices are as follows:

- Varsity Events - \$6.00
- Freshmen Events - \$4.00
- Junior High Events - \$4.00

*The LC8 does not charge for Baseball and Softball games.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

The Black River Athletic Department is committed to making all students' participation in athletics a meaningful experience. Part of this commitment is to continually improve communication with students, parent/guardians and fans. To be truly successful, communication must be clear, concise and timely. The Athletic Department will utilize a number of sources of communication to accomplish this goal, including, but not limited to, this handbook, the District & athletic websites, local media outlets, social media, and the school announcement systems.

Chain of Command

Black River Schools follows the chain of command listed below. We ask that you observe it if you elect to pursue any concerns you may have regarding the athletic program.

1. Appropriate Level Coach
2. Head Coach
3. Athletic Director
4. Building Principal
5. Superintendent
6. Board of Education

Communication students and parent/guardians can expect from their coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for the squad and the individual student.
3. When and where practice and contests are to be held.
4. Requirements necessary to be a part of the team.
5. Team rules in addition to the code of excellence.
6. Notification of injury sustained by the student.
7. Any disciplinary action toward the student that results in denial of participation.

Communication coaches should expect from students and parent/guardians:

1. Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach first.
2. Written notification of potential schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns that are directly related to the program.
4. Support toward the program's goals & directions.

To discuss a concern/issue, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Contact the Coach to make an appointment to discuss the situation. If the concern/issue has validity, the AD expects that the item first be discussed directly with the coach.
2. If for some reason the Coach cannot be reached, feel free to contact the AD who will set up an appointment for you.

3. Do not attempt to confront a Coach before, during, or after a contest. This is an emotional time for all parties and generally does not allow for objective analysis or correction of an issue.
4. Under no circumstances, except in those instances of rule/policy infringement, will a conference with a Coach have an adverse consequence on the standing of the athlete.

Appropriate concerns to for parent/guardians to discuss with coaches:

1. The mental and/or physical treatment of your student, including bullying.
2. Areas of needed skill improvement and development opportunities for your student.
3. Concerns about your student's behavior, attitude, and/or classroom performance.

Issues not appropriate for parent/guardians to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time: athletes are encouraged to discuss playing time with the Coach.
2. Team strategy, game-plans and/or play calling.
3. Comparison's of one student to another.
4. Other students' and/or athletes' academics, discipline, injury, etc; it is both impolite & illegal.

What if you hold a meeting with your Head Coach & you are not satisfied?

1. Contact the AD at 419-736-3303 ext. 1204 or email tgordon@blrv.org to set up a meeting to discuss the issue.
2. The appropriate and necessary steps will then be determined.

COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE REMIND APP, E-MAIL & PHONE

All communication from the coach or school personnel will be received through the Remind app, school phone and/or school e-mail. Each coach can establish their own Remind app through the school as well as have a school e-mail account through Black River Schools. The athletic director will have a Black River Athletics Remind account to make announcements and send out information. Information to join team remind groups will come from the coaches at preseason meetings.

To join the Black River Athletics group:
open your web browser and type: rmd.at/d8db9ed

OR

text [@d8db9ed](https://t.me/d8db9ed) to 81010

Texting and use of cell phone should not occur between school personnel and students.

CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

CODE EXCELLENCE #3 & 7

As a member of an athletic team, certain responsibilities must be maintained to continue the Black River tradition. A successful athletic program is built over generations of hard work and the dedication of many students and coaches. By joining an athletic program at Black River, you have accepted a challenge to improve upon the efforts of these teams! It is not always easy to contribute to such an imposing task. To compete as a Pirate, you may have to say no to certain items and situations that an athlete simply cannot afford to be involved with. When you wear the black & gold, you must understand the sense of pride and responsibility the uniform carries.

A student's conduct is closely observed in many different arenas. Black River cannot maintain its position as an outstanding District unless you give forth your best effort in whatever you engage. You have also assumed a leadership role as a member of an athletic squad. The student body and community will know you, witness your actions and hear your words. Those within and outside our community will judge our school by your conduct, your actions, and your attitude. Once you join a sports team, you immediately become a role model to both peers and younger students. On the playing surfaces, the use of profanity and unsportsmanlike or illegal tactics must never be used. Regardless of contest results, Black River students are expected to show respect to opponents, coaches, fans and game officials at all times.

A student is expected to reach his/her ultimate potential in the academic arena as well. As a student, you owe it to yourself to get the greatest good from your classroom experiences. Participation in athletics is an integral component to this, as it helps to broaden your strength of character, your sense of being and teaches you personal responsibility. Your studies and your participation in extracurricular activities will prepare you for the "real world." On top of maintaining good academic standing, you must give respectful attention to classroom activities and show respect for other students and school staff. Horseplay and unnecessary boisterousness are not approved habits of behavior for athletes at Black River. Be the person others want to follow.

CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENT/GUARDIANS

To enjoy your student's participation to the fullest, and make it fun and meaningful to him/her, please:

- Understand what your student wants from sports and provide support to achieve those goals.
- Encourage your student to play sports; let your student choose what & when to play.
- Set limits; make sports an enjoyable addition to your student's life!
- Show support by ensuring proper amounts of rest, nourishment and time for classwork.
- Help your student keep winning & losing in perspective.
- Help your student set challenging and realistic performance goals.
- Help your student understand the many life-lessons that athletic participation provides.
- Permit the coaches to do the coaching.
- Provide the coach with information on special health conditions your student may have and make sure your student brings any necessary medications to all practices and/or contests.
- Help your student be responsible by ensuring that he/she is at all practices and contests on time, with the proper equipment and supplies.
- Be a role model to your student by positively supporting the team at all times, including the content of your cheers and your conversations at the dinner table.
- Respect the decisions made by coaches and officials, even when you disagree with them.
- Realize that purchasing a ticket grants you a privilege to observe a contest and support a district team. This ticket does not provide you a right to verbally assault players, coaches, officials, or other fans. This, and other generally obnoxious behavior subjects you to ejection from the event. Additionally, administration reserves the right to remove and/or ban any parent/guardian or fan from school activities and/or grounds due to disorderly conduct.
- Be a fan... ***not*** a fanatic!

CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES

The Black River Athletic Department is committed to providing all students the ability to compete in a variety of activities in a properly controlled, organized and educationally sound program. In an effort to enhance our students' social, mental, and physical growth, Coaches will:

- Set a good example for participants & fans, exemplifying high moral, ethical, and sporting behavior.
- Be constantly aware that instruction takes place through modeling & structured teaching.
- Desire to win, while focusing on the health, safety, welfare, worth and dignity of the individual student.
- Be aware of the various audiences they perform in front of, including players, assistants, teachers, administrators, parents, fans, media, board of education members, etc. and will work to maintain the trust and confidence of those directly involved in the program.
- Encouraging students to be active in as many activities as they can.
- Work to discover the individual strengths, interests, and aspirations of their students and make decisions based on knowledge.
- Communicate an open and friendly willingness to listen.
- Will work with adults involved to find a suitable solution for inevitable student schedule conflicts without placing the student at the center of the conflict.
- Be prepared to respond to even the most highly pitched emotional situations in the appropriate manner. Over-reaction and impulsivity must be the exception – not the norm.
- Be highly organized and prepared for all situations. Coaches shall also be flexible and aware for the need of revision to any and all plans.
- Be committed to their craft and to further their professional knowledge through attendance of clinics and training programs to further develop their leadership abilities.
- Complete all required educational and training programs mandated by the OHSAA, Ohio Department of Education and the Black River Local Schools Board of Education.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

Varsity

The perfection of skill, playing the best overall athletes possible and winning is the emphasis at this level. While winning at all costs will never be a part of our philosophy, no apology shall be necessary when the varsity team does all it can within the bounds of ethics, integrity, and sportsmanship to win each and every contest. In certain sports, cutting may be used and it is extremely likely that some players may not see action in each contest.

Junior Varsity

This level of competition begins to focus on skill refinement and winning as a team. Cutting may occur at this level in certain sports. It is possible that not every player will have the opportunity to play in every contest.

Freshman

Emphasis at the freshman level is on participation, skill development and team success. If a sports program supports a freshman squad, efforts will be made not to cut players at this level, as the future ability of these students is largely uncertain. Attempts will be made to play as many students as possible during each contest while striving for victory for the entire team.

Middle School

Preferably, two teams will be created at the middle school level in each sport; at the 7th grade and the 8th grade levels. If low numbers make this impossible, combining all 7th and 8th grade students will create a single middle school team. Emphasis at this level is on individual participation along with team success. Every attempt will be made to encourage student participation including attempts to play each student in every contest while also ensuring success for the entire team.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

CODE OF EXCELLENCE #8 & 9

As outlined by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and this handbook, students are prohibited from participation in any mandatory practice, scrimmage, and/or game until all of the following items have been completed and turned in:

1. OHSAA Physical Examination Form: must be cleared annually by a physician.
2. Emergency Medical Authorization Form: provides permission to treat your student in the case of an emergency situation.
3. Insurance Release Form: insurance must be carried on all students participating in athletics.
4. Concussion Information Form: provides important information on concussions and the importance of following proper protocol regarding them.
5. Athlete Code of Conduct Contract Agreement: means the student and parent/guardians has read and understands all materials included in the athletic handbook.
6. View Lindsay's Law and complete the paperwork.
7. Satisfaction of OHSAA & Black River Eligibility Requirements

NOTICE OF RISK PARTICIPATION

Students and parent/guardians must realize and understand the very real possibility of serious injury, ***or even death***, as a normal hazard of athletic participation. Black River will use the following safeguards in an effort to eliminate injury to students, but cannot in any way imply a guarantee of a student's total safety once they choose to participate in athletics:

- All coaches will adhere to all OHSAA rules, regulations, and guidelines, as well as obtain proper coaching certifications, including training in sports-related first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Coaches and/or the athletic trainer (if applicable) will provide information on proper conditioning, nutrition, and injury prevention and rehabilitation to students.

GENERAL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES

CODE OF EXCELLENCE #4

The following policies apply to all interscholastic student/athletes enrolled in Black River Schools. These and all training rules, policies and procedures are in effect 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week as defined by the Black River Board of Education. Questions regarding interpretation of these rules, policies and procedures should be brought to the Athletic Director of clarification.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

To be eligible for participation in athletics, students must maintain high standards of attendance and academic performance. **A student/athlete must be in attendance at school a minimum of 3.5 hours in order to continue participation in events. In the event of any emergency, exceptions may be made by the building principal or athletic director upon receipt of a verified excuse, or an excuse signed by a physician, and/or parents in a family emergency. Athletes are expected to be in attendance at the start of school on the day following an athletic event.**

BUS POLICY

Student-Athletes are expected to behave and adhere to all Black River School bus policies. Any misbehavior on athletic trips that violate Black River bus policies will result in punishment of the athlete that could include suspension from games/events and possible removal from team. The punishment will depend on the severity of the violation and will be at the discretion of the Athletic Director and/or Principal.

COLLEGE RECRUITMENT

In the event that a college coach and/or recruiter makes personal contact with a student, the student has the obligation to notify his/her coach and the AD. Failure to inform your coach and the AD of such contact could damage future collegiate eligibility. More details on college recruitment information may be obtained online at www.ncaa.org.

SHARING STUDENT ATHLETES WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES

Black River students are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, but are warned about taking on too much for their own good. Students who choose to become active in numerous activities must recognize that the potential for numerous conflicts. Students are reminded that by joining a Black River team, they are making the commitment to the school and their classmates in regard to all practices and/or contests.

For the purpose of eliminating potential scheduling conflicts and resolving them in a positive and productive manner without the student being placed in the center of the dispute, the following guidelines are to be followed whenever a schedule conflict occurs:

- All performance activities, competitions, trips, conventions, etc. must be placed on the District calendar as soon as they are scheduled to notify all of potential conflicts.

- Any formal performance (game, contest, tournament, etc.) takes precedence over a practice activity.
- Any activity that counts toward a classroom grade will have precedence.
- Precedence will be given to the activity where the student is an active participant versus one where he/she is basically a spectator.
- If a schedule conflict still exists, the coach(es), advisors and/or directors involved will resolve the conflict by utilizing an equal sharing of the student's time. This can be accomplished by sharing of time on a given day or alternating days of attendance at the given activities.
- At no time will there be negative consequences for a student who finds him/herself in an activity conflict given that he/she has followed the directions provided by the advising authority.

CUTTING PROCEDURES

While the Athletic Department wishes to involve as many students as possible in athletics, there are times when students may be eliminated from a team for a number of reasons, including, but not limited to:

- a. Optimum number of students to conduct productive practices and ensure adequate substitutes,
- b. Academic eligibility of those students trying out,
- c. Talent, attitude and work ethic of those trying out,
- d. Number of individual students trying out,
- e. Specific sport-related skills and abilities.

In a situation where it becomes necessary to eliminate students from participation on a team due to the above, the following are the minimum guidelines that coaches will follow when cutting:

1. Prior to the 1st day of tryouts, the coaching staff will make known to all stakeholders (athletes, parents, coaches, etc.) that "cuts" will be taking place so everyone knows in advance.
2. Tryouts must last at least 3 full practice sessions. Students will be informed of the length of the tryout period in advance.
3. "Cut-lists" will not be used. Cut students are to be told in an individual meeting with the coach the reason(s) he/she was eliminated.
4. Provided the previous guidelines are followed, the coach's decision is final in regard to all cuts.

DRESS CODE CODE OF EXCELLENCE #7

Students participating in athletic workouts, summer leagues, practices, scrimmages, contests, etc., are expected to follow the basic principles of the District's Student Dress Code at all times, including that students shall not dress or appear in a fashion deemed inappropriate. Students may not dress in a fashion that either interferes with the student's health & welfare or that of other students, or causes disruption or directly interferes with the educational process of which athletics is a part. Any form of dress or grooming that attracts undue attention or violates the previous statement is unacceptable.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Student use of electronic devices during athletic participation will be at the discretion of the individual Head Coach or OHSAA regulation. However, all electronic devices with audio/video recording capabilities are strictly prohibited from any restroom or locker facility. The District assumes no liability for lost, stolen or damaged devices.

EQUIPMENT and/or UNIFORMS

Any athlete issued uniforms/equipment shall be held responsible for their care. Failure to turn in assigned equipment will result in a charge for the items lost. Payment shall be based on the cost of replacing the equipment. An athlete who owed for the lost equipment will not receive his/her awards and will not be permitted to participate in another sport until all obligations are met. Seniors who owe for athletic equipment will not be allowed to go through graduation ceremonies unless their obligations are met.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Black River Local School's policy in regard to contests and practices conducted on days when school has been canceled is delineated below. First and foremost, Black River is concerned about the safety of its students, employees and community members. Factors that contribute to the cancellation of classes are varied and require evaluation of circumstances that may change significantly between 6:00am and 2:00pm.

When school is closed due to factors other than inclement weather, such as maintenance breakdowns or other extraordinary events, all contests and practices may be conducted as usual, provided that consideration is made for participant safety. When school is closed due to weather-related conditions like snow or ice, the following policy will be employed:

- No practices or contests at the Middle School level (7th and 8th grade) will be held.
- High School activities may be conducted provided no punitive measures are taken against students whose parent/guardian(s) prohibit him/her from attending.
- **No athletic activity of any kind will take place prior to 2:00pm.**
- A travel advisory of "Level 2" or worse will result in the automatic postponement and/or cancellation of practice or contests.

- Head Coaches must obtain permission to conduct practice activities from the Athletic Director, Principal, and/or Superintendent based on projected travel conditions during the activity time.
- **Decisions in regard to contests will be made as late in the day as possible in consultation with the opponent school’s administration.**

MISSING PRACTICE
CODE OF EXCELLENCE #4

Athletes must attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach of the team. They also must always consult his/her Head Coach directly before missing practice for any reason. **NEVER** rely on a teammate to deliver this message for you! Specific penalties for violations will be determined by the coach as a part of the team’s individual policies.

MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION

The Black River Athletic Department highly encourages students to participate in multiple sports during the same season. Obviously this can only be done in certain situations and will be determined by the AD and Head Coaches involved. In order for a student to participate in multiple sports in a season and complete the season in good standing, he/she must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The student, and his/her parent/guardian(s), will meet with the AD to identify his/her “**primary sport**” prior to the start of mandatory practices.
2. The Head Coaches of each sport will meet to establish the practice contest schedules, as well as for the participation expectations placed upon the student, prior to the beginning of practices.
3. For scheduling purposes:
 - a. The “**primary sport**” will take precedence in all matters of conflicting practice times and regular season contest dates.
 - b. Any OHSAA-sponsored tournament shall take precedence over a regular season contest.
 - c. The Head Coaches involved must rectify any schedule conflicts; at no time will the student be placed in the center of the decision-making process.
4. The student and his/her parent/guardian(s) will attest to their agreement with the schedule and expectations of the written multi-sport participation plan devised by the Head Coaches involved before being permitted to participate in a second activity. Failure to follow this written agreement will result in the revocation of the privilege of multi-sport participation.
5. Any unresolved schedule conflicts or issues would be forwarded to the AD for a final decision.

OUT OF SEASON CONDITIONING/LIFTING/OPEN GYM REGULATIONS

All students are encouraged to participate in non-mandatory out of season conditioning/lifting/open gyms to improve their skills and abilities. When an athlete is participating on a sports team that is currently in-season they have made a commitment to that team for the entire season. Students that are on a team that is in-season are prohibited from participating in “off-season” *team* workouts, open gyms, shootouts, etc. of another school-sponsored team. This policy does not prohibit students from taking part in *individual skill development* (i.e. hitting, pitching, shooting, etc.) at open gym opportunities. In the spirit of this policy, Head Coaches involved will meet to determine what, if any, activities the student in question can participate in, with the in-season coach having preference. Coaches will make every attempt to schedule “off season” activities at times that will not interfere with in-season sports and/or athletes. All student-athletes are encouraged to lift year round when capable but are highly encouraged to refrain from lifting on a game day when participating in an in-season sport.

PAY TO PARTICIPATE CODE OF EXCELLENCE #4

The Black River Board of Education reserves the right to assess participation fees of extra-curricular activities if deemed necessary. **In this case, all athletic pay to participate fees and school fees must be paid by the day before the 1st varsity contest of the sport being paid for.** Athletes who fail to pay by this deadline will be ineligible to participate in any contest until the fee is paid. Payments can be made at the appropriate school office. Coaches are instructed to not handle any pay to participate money. **This payment can be the entire amount or a payment plan can be set up with the Treasurer of Black River Schools.**

PREGNANCY POLICY

A pregnant student may participate in an athletic program only if a physician certifies in writing that the student is physically able to participate in specific events or activities. This statement shall serve as medical clearance and assumption of responsibility and liability for the pregnant student’s participation. A pregnant student may not participate in any manner until such a physician’s statement is provided to the AD.

PRACTICE TIMES

Head Coaches will provide a copy of the team’s practice schedule to each player and the AD. Please note that schedules may change on a daily occurrence and without prior notice. Coaches will remind team members of the next day’s schedule at each practice session or following each contest. **No mandatory team practice may begin prior to 6:00am or conclude after 10:00pm without prior authorization from the AD.**

QUITTING and/or CHANGING SPORTS

A student who quits or is removed from a team after five days from the official start of practice, will not be permitted to try out for another sport during the same season or

prepare for another sport, until the sport the athlete quit or was removed from has concluded unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the AD and Head Coaches involved. A student cut from one sport may join another sport during the same season. Coaches will make cuts in a timely matter. All awards for a particular sport will be forfeited by an athlete who is dismissed from a team or quits a team in that sport.

RECOGNITION NIGHT

All teams are required to have a post-season awards recognition night. Each Head Coach is responsible for coordinating with the AD to schedule the awards ceremony for their individual sport. Individual athlete attendance is required in order to obtain any athletic award(s) earned during the season of participation (i.e. varsity letter, numerals, sport pin, certificates, trophies, etc.). Any student failing to attend their sports Recognition Night without prior written excuse by a parent/guardian that has been approved by the AD will forfeit the right to receive their award(s).

SOCIAL MEDIA, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, INTERNET POLICY Code of Excellence #7

While social networking can be an important aspect of one's life, chat rooms, bulletin boards, blogs, texting, and items such as Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat and others can pose a serious danger to personal health, safety, and welfare. Certain actions within these sites can also lead to serious issues at school and within athletic programs. As participation in athletics is a privilege, students and parent/guardian(s) must accept personal responsibility for any images, postings, or information appearing on the Internet.

When using electronic communication, visiting or appearing on any Internet sites, those involved in the Black River Athletic program are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and acceptable behavior. These acceptable standards are based upon the policies and regulations described in the Black River Local Schools Student Handbook, this Athletic Participation Handbook and individual team rules, regulations and expectations.

Any electronic posting or communication that disrupts either the educational or athletic environment, which advocates the violation of any school or team policy, or attacks students, teams, coaches, or officials is unacceptable. These would include, but not limited to: the consumption of alcohol and/or the use of illicit drugs; inappropriate sexually-oriented material; activities involving bullying, hazing or intimidation; speaking ill of teammates or opponents, officials, or coaches. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from the athletic program.

Coaches will be required to use the remind app as a means of communication with athletes & parents/guardians.

SUSPENSION POLICIES

A student who is serving an out of school suspension is ineligible for any athletic participation (practice or contest) on the days of the suspension. A student who has completed his/her suspension responsibilities, is eligible to participate in contests after he/she has completed one full regularly scheduled practice. He/she may participate in the next regularly scheduled practice the day after he/she has completed the last day of his/her suspension.

In the case if an in school suspension, it will be up to the Head Coach and his/her individual team rules to determine the consequences for the student serving the suspension.

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

When traveling to and from athletic events, students are to follow the guidelines set forth by their coach, along with all regular school bus rules. All athletes must ride the bus going to and coming from athletic contests. The coach may give a student/athlete permission to ride with a parent from an athletic event under “special” circumstances. The student’s parent must notify the coach in writing of the request to take their student with them in advance. Athletes will only be released to the student’s parents and will not be released to any other party.

VACATION POLICY

Students are highly discouraged from partaking in vacations during the sports season. Those wishing to take vacations during their season of participation may wish to reassess their commitment to the team. In the event of an unavoidable vacation conflict, a student must notify their Head Coach well in advance of the vacation and be prepared to assume the consequences of their actions. Missing any portion of the season will have an adverse effect on their team status, *including playing time and award status*. No student choosing to take a vacation during the season should expect to return to the team without having to earn his or her position back.

Athletic Department Code of Excellence #1-9

The following rules, regulations, and guidelines will be in effect from the moment a student (athlete, manager, trainer, statisticians, etc.) begins active participation in any interscholastic program in the Black River Local Schools. **These regulations are in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from August 1st through July 31st, which includes the entire school year and summer. These regulations are also in effect on or off of school properties, buses, practices, games, summer camps, team trips, and any other school related function.** Offenses in this policy will be calculated for the student's entire athletic career during grades 7-12.

In the event that a student fails to comply with these standards and expectations, it will be interpreted by the Athletic Department as an indication that the student does not have sufficient desire to participate in the athletic program. Therefore, the student may be denied the privilege of participating until such time as he/she proves his/her desire to participate. The precise period of the denial of participation will depend on the violation, attitude and disciplinary history of the student. Repeated and/or flagrant violations may result in total denial of participation from the interscholastic athletic program. ***For any student in violation of the athletic policy not during the season of his/her participation or at the end of a season, disciplinary procedures will carry into the next consecutive season of participation.***

It is important to remember that if a student is fortunate enough to become a member of a Black River sports team, this does not indicate a right to participate on a team. It is a privilege to be an athlete and the privilege of participation is dependent upon a student successfully upholding the rules, regulations, expectations and guidelines contained within the Athletic Participation Handbook (APH) as well as those contained within the individual team rules, regulations, expectations and guidelines.

DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

As a matter of constitutional, as opposed to statutory law, a student does not have a constitutionally protected liberty or property interest in extracurricular activities. In *Glenn v. Harper*, 620 F.2d 302 (6th Cir. 1980), the District Court determined that athletes do not have a right to due process procedures (notice, hearing, etc.). However, every effort will be made by school administration to inform the student and parents/guardians of the violation and potential consequences. When the alleged infraction becomes known, the student shall be informed of the possibility of the denial of participation and the reason(s) for such action by the Coach, Athletic Director, and /or Principal. Administrators have the right to suspend the student from school and deny the privilege of athletic participation in accordance with the policies outlined in this handbook. Conduct unbecoming of a Black River Local Schools athlete for violating the student code of conduct as determined by the student handbook may result in denial of some or all participation. Parents/guardians of Black River students are then given the

opportunity to appeal all decisions of athletic participation directly to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision is final. If the decision is made to appeal a denial of participation, the superintendent's office must be notified in writing within twenty-four (24) hours.

HAZING/BULLYING POLICY CODE OF EXCELLENCE #5

No student shall plan, encourage, or engage in any HAZING/BULLYING activities. Hazing/bullying is defined as committing an act or coercing another into an act that causes or creates substantial risk of physical or mental harm to any person. Permission, consent or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing/bullying does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy.

FIRST OFFENSE

The student will be denied participation for one calendar year, may be suspended from school up to a period of ten (10) days, and possibly recommended for expulsion.

If a student enrolls and actively participates in an intervention program through a professional program and completes the recommended program, the denial of participation will be reduced to 30% of the scheduled contests (**rainouts, cancellations, postponements, etc..., do not count towards the 30% criteria, only completed games**) in that current sports season and the suspension/expulsion will be waived. (All costs related to the athletes counseling will be the responsibility of the parent/guardians of the student athlete). If less than 30% of the scheduled contests remain in a season, a carryover will occur in the next sport in which the student participates. During the period of 30% denial the student will be permitted to practice with the team as long as, he/she continues to attend a professional counseling program. The student will not be permitted to be in uniform at any contests. Proof of the completion of the recommended program must be documented and reported to the principal. If the student fails to complete the recommended program the student will be subject to enforcement of the full amount of the 1st offense.

SECOND OFFENSE

The student will be denied participation for one calendar year, may be suspended from school up to a period of ten (10) days, and possibly recommended for expulsion.

The student shall participate in a professional counseling program recommended by administration at the expense of the parent/guardian. (Suspension/expulsion from school will be waived upon participation and completion of the professional counseling program. **Denial of participation will not be waived.**

THIRD OFFENSE

If a student violates this policy three times in his/her athletic career, he/she will be denied participation for the remainder of his/her tenure at Black River Local Schools. A referral

will be made to a professional counseling program. He or she shall receive a ten (10) day suspension with a recommendation for expulsion.

**CHEMICAL HEALTH POLICY: OTC DRUGS &
SUPPLEMENTS,
ILLEGAL DRUGS, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ALCOHOL &
VAPING DEVICES OR OILS**
CODE OF EXCELLENCE #1 & #2

Students are prohibited from using, dispensing, selling, distributing, transmitting, and/or possessing any form of tobacco. If an infraction occurs on school grounds the student may be suspended for a period of up to ten (10) days and may be recommended for expulsion depending on the circumstances in accordance with the Student Code of Excellence. By law any positive use of alcohol, vaping devices/oils and illegal drugs will result in suspension and possible dismissal from the athletic program for a period of time.

FIRST OFFENSE

The student will be denied athletic participation for thirty-percent (30%) of the total contests in a season, plus receive any disciplinary consequences as dictated by the school discipline code. The exact number of contests to be missed will be determined by the season(s) and/or sport(s) participated in.

The student shall be required to attend and participate in all practice sessions during the denial of participation period. **He/She will not be with the team at competitions. He/She will not be allowed to travel with the team or be around the team during competition.**

SECOND OFFENSE

The student will be denied athletic participation for the remainder of the current season and fifty-percent (50%) of the next consecutive season participated in.

This denial of participation may be reduced to a thirty-percent (30%) denial of participation, provided the student receives an evaluation by a certified counselor of physician trained in chemical dependency. Proof of successful completion of such a program must be provided to the AD before a reduction will be provided.

The student shall be required to attend and participate in all practice sessions during the denial of participation period. **He/She will not be with the team at contests during the denial of participation period.**

THIRD OFFENSE

The student will be denied athletic participation for one (1) calendar year from the point of the violation.

The denial of participation may be reduced to a six (6) month denial of participation period, provided the student receives a full & complete dependency assessment by a certified professional counselor and follows all recommendations of the assessor. The assessments, and implementation of the assessor's plan, are at the expense of the parent/guardian. No reduction will be granted until after completion of both the assessment and the recommendations. Proof of successful completion of such a program must be provided to the AD before a reduction will be provided.

The student shall be required to attend and participate in all practice sessions during the denial of participation period. **The student will not travel with the team or be with the team at home contests.**

FOURTH OFFENSE

The student shall be denied athletic participation for the remainder of his/her career, without the opportunity for a reduction.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

As a member of the OHSAA, Black River adheres to all rules, regulations, Bylaws and guidelines of the Association. As such, students wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics at Black River must meet certain eligibility requirements as established by both the OHSAA and the Black River Board of Education. For complete details on student eligibility, visit <http://ohsaa.org/eligibility/default.asp>.

AGE LIMITATION

A student enrolled in high school will become ineligible for interscholastic athletics upon turning age 20. His/her eligibility automatically ends on the day of the 20th birthday. (OHSAA 4-2-1)

A student shall become eligible for high school athletics when the student attains the fifteenth birthday before August 1, or when the student attains ninth grade status. (OHSAA 4-2-3)

CONDUCT, CHARACTER, DISCIPLINE

In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletic contests and related activities are not involved, the school itself is to be the sole judge as to student participation. (OHSAA 4-5-1)

Any student suspended or expelled from a member school shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletics at any member school for the duration of the suspension or expulsion. (OHSAA 4-5-5)

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

Students participating in a school-sponsored sport must be enrolled in and attending full-time in accordance with all duly adopted Board of Education policies. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

Students enrolled in a joint vocational school are eligible at the high school where the students' records are maintained. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

A student enrolled in a member school who receives his/her education through a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Revised Code that is sponsored by the city, local or exempted village school district in which the student is entitled to attend school pursuant to Section 3313.64 or 3313.65 of the Revised Code, is eligible to participate at the member public school that is operated by the school district sponsoring the community school, provided the student is enrolled and attending pursuant to Board of Education policy. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

A student enrolled full time in a postsecondary institution is eligible to participate at the high school where the student's records are maintained, provided the student is receiving high school credit for a minimum of five one credit courses in the postsecondary institution. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

A student enrolled in an alternative school that is sponsored by a Board of Education or similar governing board is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend provided the alternative school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

A student who is home schooled and is enrolled in a member school in accordance with the partial enrollment policy of a Board of Education or similar governing board may be eligible at the school where the student is enrolled and attending. Such partial enrollment policy requires that at least one of the courses be taken at the school's physical location. Note: A student entering a member school from a home school must do so at the beginning of the school year after having been home schooled for at least one calendar year. Failure to meet this one-year provision requires the student to be enrolled for a minimum of one grading period before the student can be declared eligible. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

A student enrolled in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) school that is established under Chapter 3326 of the Revised Code is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend, provided the STEM school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school. Note: An incoming ninth-grade student may establish eligibility at any member school that admits him or her and establishes initial eligibility as indicated in transfer bylaw 4-7-2. After establishing initial eligibility, students who attend STEM schools are subject to the transfer bylaw. (OHSAA 4-3-1)

After a student completes the eighth grade, or is otherwise eligible for high school athletics pursuant to OHSAA bylaw 4-2-3, the student shall be eligible for a period not to exceed eight semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not. (OHSAA 4-3-3)

RESIDENCE

In determining one's residence, the following criteria shall apply: (a) where the parents and family members sleep the majority of the time, (b) where the mail is received, (c) where the meals are prepared and eaten, (d) where the parents are registered to vote, and (e) where important family activities take place during significant parts of each day. (OHSAA 4-6-1)

SCHOLARSHIP

In order to be eligible in grades 9-12, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period. Furthermore, during the preceding grading period, the student must have received passing grades in a minimum of five (5) one-credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation. (OHSAA 4-4-1)

A student enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from 8th grade must have passed a minimum of five (5) of all subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled (OHSAA 4-4-4) and have failed no more than one (1) course in the preceding grading period.

A student enrolled in 7th grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grades 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period and passed a minimum of five (5) of all subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled (OHSAA 4-4-5) and have failed no more than one (1) course in the preceding grading period.

The Black River Board of Education requires that all students in grades 7-12 achieve a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 1.6 to maintain athletic eligibility.

***Each student-athlete must have passing grades in core courses which include: English, math, science and social studies for eligibility.**

Summer school and other educational options cannot be used to substitute for failure to meet academic standards. (OHSAA 4-4-7)

The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. For the purposes of this bylaw, "school day" includes faculty in-service days, calamity days and regular school attendance days but not holidays or school breaks. (OHSAA 4-4-3)

Students who are active in athletics but are ineligible due to substandard academic performance shall be under the following guidelines/expectations:

1. An ineligible student continues to be bound by all rules, regulations and/or expectations of the Black River Athletic Participation Handbook and his/her individual team rules/policies.
2. An ineligible student may participate in all practices, open gyms, workouts and/or scrimmages and may travel with the team to away contests.
3. An ineligible student may not participate in contests of any type.
4. An ineligible student may not take part in team pictures, and team recognitions (including awards night, pep rallies and/or other special events) and will not appear on team rosters.

STUDENTS FROM FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Students from outside the United States are ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner of the OHSAA.

TRANSFERS

The transfer bylaws apply to all students enrolled in grades 9-12. These bylaws apply to all schools, both public and private. (OHSAA 4-7-1) Students transferring schools are ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner of the OHSAA.

ATHLETIC AWARD INFORMATION

To earn an athletic award, the student must complete the season in good standing, which includes attending the post season awards banquet, returning any school-issued uniforms/equipment and maintaining eligibility and behavioral expectations. The following guidelines will be followed when presenting athletic awards to students.

- All awards must conform to the standards established by the OHSAA.
- A list of award winners must be submitted by the Head Coach, to the AD, within one week after the season has ended.
- In the event that a student is injured during the season and can no longer participate, he/she would be eligible for an award based on the recommendation of the head coach.
- No individual may receive more than one block “BR” letter and no more than one set of numbers. If they have received a letter in another sport, they will only receive a pin for the new sport.
- The requirements to letter in a sport will be included in team rules and will be determined by the head coaches in communication with the AD. These qualifications for a letter will be communicated before the start of the season.

Athletic awards will be presented as follows:

- 1st Year Letterwinner
 - Varsity “BR”
 - sport pin
- 2nd Year Letterwinner
 - sport pin

- 3rd Year Letterwinner
 - sport plaque
 - sport pin
- 4th Year Letterwinner
 - sport trophy
 - sport pin
 - lifetime pass
- Junior Varsity and/or Freshman Certificate: A participation certificate is presented to those students at the JV or freshman level that do not meet the requirements for a varsity letter.
- Middle School Participation Certificate: A certificate is presented to those middle school students that indicate the sport and season of participation.
- Scholar Athlete Certificate: A certificate is presented at the post-season banquet to those students in grades 9-12 that earn a varsity letter and a 3.50 GPA during their season of participation.
- A student will receive their numerals upon completion of their first sport season participated in at the high school level.

BLACK RIVER LOCAL SCHOOLS ATHLETIC COUNCIL

The Black River Local Schools Athletic Council integrates all interscholastic athletics within the educational program of the District. To accomplish this task, the Athletic Council recommends athletic policy and exists as an open forum for the discussion of any athletic concerns from coaches, students and/or parents/guardians. The purpose of the Athletic Council is to provide a way in which the Black River Local School Athletic Department can improve by:

1. Discussing problems or areas of concern within the athletic program.
2. Attempting to resolve issues by cooperation before they escalate.
3. Making recommendations to the Black River Board of Education as they pertain to the Athletic Program (changes in the Athletic Handbook).
4. Promoting positive communication between the administration, the AD, coaching staff, parents and community.

The Black River Athletic Council shall consist of the following individuals:

1. High School Principal
2. Middle School Principal
3. Athletic Director
4. Head Coach for each varsity sport

The AD shall be the secretary for the Athletic Council. The AD will send out an agenda and meeting time & date. The AD will be responsible for running each meeting. In the event the AD is not present, the principal shall run the meeting.

ATHLETIC EVENT PASSES

The Black River Athletic Department offers Yearly Passes for all home athletic events during the school year. Current prices for yearly passes are as follows:

- **FAMILY PASS- Good for all sports throughout the year \$250.00 @ HS & MS Events**
- **ADULT SEASON PASS PER SPORT**
 - **High School**
 - **Football-\$25**
 - **Boys & Girls Basketball-\$50**
 - **Volleyball-\$50**
 - **Middle School**
 - **Football-\$15**
 - **Volleyball-\$2**
 - **Boys& Girls Basketball-\$25.00**
 - **No price as of yet for Wrestling.**
- **STUDENT PASS**
 - **\$25.00**
 - **Good for all MS & HS sports throughout the year**
- **SENIOR CITIZEN PASS (62 and over)- FREE**

Pay to Participate Fees

Code of Excellence #6

High School (Grades 9-12)

- \$75 per season
- ***Fees to be paid before first regular season contest***

Middle School (Grades 7-8) - \$50 per season

- Cheerleading (Fall) - \$25 only
- Cheerleading (Winter) - \$25 only
- ***Fees to be paid before first regular season contest***

All fees including athletics, school and meal fees must be paid or a payment plan in place.

- Athletes will be denied competition or removed from sport if no attempt to pay fee or implement a payment plan prior to the first regular season contest. If full payment can't be made you can call the board office and sent up a payment plan with the Treasurer.
- If a student-athlete participates in more than one sport in the same season he/she only has to pay the fee once.
- See the Pay to Participate fee sheet that is included in the pre-season packet of paperwork for further details and info.
- All Pay to Participate fees must be paid directly to the High School Athletic Office.
- Middle School athletes can turn in fees to the Middle School Office and they will be forwarded to the High School.
- **Please do not turn in money to coaches.**

Sportsmanship....

Make it a tradition...

Practice it for Life!

WE ARE!!!!

