



# STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

2023-2024  
SCHOOL YEAR

Sto-Rox School District  
1105 Valley Street  
McKees Rocks, PA 15136  
412-771-3213, ext. 1000

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Sto-Rox High School Athletic Program. Congratulations on becoming an important part of a wonderful tradition of athletic excellence. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people and many years. As a member of an interscholastic team at Sto-Rox High School, you have inherited a tremendous tradition that you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been to win with honor. We strive to win, but only with honor to our athletes, our schools, and our community. Such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned. Over many years, our teams have achieved more than their share of league and tournament championships. Many individuals have set records and achieved All-American, All-State, and All-Conference honors.

It will be a challenge to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. When you wear Viking green and white, we assume that you understand our traditions and are willing to assume the responsibilities that go with them. However, the contributions you make will be a satisfying accomplishment for you and your family.

**1. Responsibility to Yourself:** The most important responsibility is to broaden and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to derive the greatest benefit from your high school experiences.

**2. Responsibility to Your School:** Once established as a Sto-Rox Athlete, you have assumed a responsibility to represent your school in a mature manner at all times on and off the playing field. Sto-Rox High School cannot maintain its position as an outstanding school unless you do your best in the activity in which you engage. By participating in athletics to the maximum of your ability, you are contributing to your school's reputation. Make the Sto-Rox School District proud of you and your community proud of your school by consistently demonstrating these ideals.

**3. Responsibility to Others:** As a team member, you also bear a heavy responsibility to your family and community. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all of the training rules, that you have practiced to the best of your ability and played the game all out, your family and community can be proud of you. Additionally, the younger students throughout the Sto-Rox School District are watching you. As a student athlete, you have a responsibility to be a good role model for the younger students in Sto-Rox.

## **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

### **A. The philosophy of the Sto-Rox Athletic Department is:**

- Provide a strong balance between educational and athletic development.
- Provide leadership for our youth through teaching and example.
- Obtain maximum participation from our student body.
- Build character and competitive spirit, to teach the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and the value of true sportsmanship.
- Allow the students to learn and practice healthy habits that will stay with them throughout their lives.
- Enable the development of pride in our school, community, and ourselves.

### **B. Athletic Goals and Objectives**

**Our Goal** - The student-athlete shall become a more effective citizen in a democratic society.

**Our Specific Objectives** - The student-athlete shall learn:

- 1. To work with others** - A person must develop self-discipline, respect for authority, and the spirit of hard work and sacrifice. The team and its objectives must be placed higher than personal desires.
- 2. To be successful** - Our society is very competitive. We do not always win but succeed when we continually strive to do so. You can learn to handle defeat only by striving to win with dedication. Develop a desire to excel.
- 3. To develop sportsmanship** - To accept any defeat like a true sport, knowing we have done our best, we need to develop desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation, and dependability.
- 4. To improve** - As an athlete, you must establish a goal, and you must constantly try to achieve that goal. Try to improve in the skills and knowledge required and those personal traits that enhance the success of a team.
- 5. To enjoy athletics** - It is necessary for athletes to enjoy participation, to acknowledge all of the personal rewards to be derived from athletics, and to give sufficiently of themselves in order to persevere and improve the program.
- 6. To develop desirable personal health habits** - To be an active, contributing citizen, it is essential to obtain a high degree of physical fitness through exercise and good health habits and develop the desire to maintain this level of physical fitness after formal competition.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **A. Board of School Directors**

The Board of School Directors has the responsibility to set all policies for the Sto-Rox School District. It is responsible for interpreting the needs of the community and the requirements of the professional organization.

#### **Additional responsibilities include:**

1. Developing policies in accordance with state statutes and mandates in accordance with the educational needs and wishes of the people.
2. Evaluating the interscholastic athletic program in terms of its value to the community.

### **B. The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)**

All schools are voluntary members of the PIAA. As a member, Sto-Rox School District agrees to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations promulgated by this association.

The primary role of the state association is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the student/athletes and a balance with other educational programs. The association solicits input and is responsive to requests for rule modification from member schools, appointed committees, and coaches.

The state association attempts to enforce such rules that assure the greatest good for the greatest number and to ensure that competition is conducted in an appropriate manner.

### **C. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS consists of fifty-one individual state high school athletic and/or activities associations. The purposes of the NFHS are to serve, protect, and enhance the interstate activity interests of the high schools belonging to state associations; to assist in those activities of the state associations which can best be operated on a nationwide scale; to sponsor meetings, publications, and activities which will permit each state association to profit by the experience of all other member associations; and to coordinate the work to minimize duplication.

The NFHS is both a service and regulatory agency. The growth and influence of state associations and the NFHS ensures some degree of teamwork on the part of more than 20,000 schools and enables them to formulate policies for the improvement of interscholastic activities.

#### **D. The Athletic League**

Sto-Rox High School is a voluntary member of the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL). This league was established to encourage member schools to improve their co-curricular program in athletics. The conference membership facilitates the arranging of schedules, equalizing competition, and conducting league meets, and determining league championships. The conference provides Sto-Rox High School the opportunity for competition without excessive travel and with schools of similar size and athletic philosophy. Membership implies abiding by conference schedules, rules, and regulations.

#### **CONDITIONS OF P.I.A.A. ELIGIBILITY**

**1. Semester Rule** - A student shall not represent his or her school in interscholastic athletics if he or she has:

- 1.1 Been in attendance more than 8 semesters beyond 8th grade.
- 1.2 Played four seasons beyond 8th grade in any one form of interscholastic athletics.

**2. Age Rule** - A student shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition upon attaining the age of nineteen years old, with the following exception: if the age of 19 is attained on or after July 1, the pupil shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete through that school year.

**3. Amateur Status Required** - In order to be eligible to participate in an interscholastic athletic contest, a student must be an amateur in the sport involved. An amateur athlete is one who engages in athletic competition solely for the education, physical, mental, social, and pleasure benefits derived therefrom.

- **Definition of Consideration** - consideration consists of cash, items which are the equivalent of cash items which are a representative of value, and items which have intrinsic value other than those permitted under Section 3 hereof.
- **Loss of Amateur Status** - an athlete loses his/her amateur status in an interscholastic sport whenever:
  - **3.1** He/she, or the school or organization which he/she represents, receives compensation, other consideration, or an award not permitted under Section 4 hereof, for or related to his/her athletic ability, performance, participation, or services.
  - **3.2** He/she plays on a professional team or as an individual professional.
  - **3.3** He/she receives consideration for becoming a member of an athletic organization or school.
  - **3.4** He/she signs a contract whereby he/she agrees to compete in any athletic competition for consideration. (Ex. It is not a violation for a high school baseball player to attend a professional baseball tryout camp, provided (1) that no expenses are paid to him and (2) his

participation is otherwise in conformity with the National Federation Major-Minor League Agreement).

- **3.5** He/she accepts compensation or other consideration for teaching, training, or coaching in a sport. It is not a violation of this rule for a high school athlete to receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities or for serving as a lifeguard at swimming areas.
- **3.6** He/she sells or pawns his athletic achievement awards.

**4. Permissible Awards -** A school may purchase a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, jersey, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque, or similar trophy, with appropriate instructional insignia or comparable identification, for an athlete who has earned the official school letter or award, and present the same at the time the school award is made.

The sponsor or sponsors of an athletic event or group of events may purchase any of the above for an athlete who has earned the official award for the event or events, and present the same at the time the official award for the event is made.

A non-profit service organization approved by the school principal or the news media, may purchase any of the above items for an athlete, in recognition of his athletic ability or performance, and present the same at the time appropriate to such recognition.

The institutions listed above in this Section 3 may also sponsor athletic banquets to which athletes may be invited, without charging admission to such athletes.

A student may accept from an institution of higher education which he/she visits in connection with his/her prospective or possible attendance there as a student, reasonable expenses necessitated by such visit, and free admission to home athletic events of such institution which occur during visit.

**5. How Amateur Status Can Be Regained -** A player, who has lost his/her amateur status, may be reinstated by the suspending body after a period of one year from the date of suspension, providing that he/she refrains from all activity prohibited by Section 2 hereof during that year.

- All-Star Contests and Contests to Qualify for and/or Determine a Single National High School/Interscholastic Individual Champion or Championship Team (National High School/Interscholastic Championships).
- Students who participate in an all-star contest or in national high school/interscholastic championships shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletics in the involved sport for a period of one year from the date of such participation.

P.I.A.A. considers an athletic activity to constitute an all-star contest(s) if either of the following elements is present:

1. Participants qualify for participation in the activity as a result of high school/interscholastic athletic ability, performance, or reputation.
2. Participants are selected by a means other than qualifying for the activity through a try-out session.

## **REQUIREMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

### **A. Physical Examination**

No student shall be eligible to participate in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and/or contests unless the student has completed a comprehensive initial pre-participation physical evaluation (“CIPPE”) performed by an Authorized Medical Examiner and the Authorized Medical Examiner has completed the PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation form (“CIPPE”).

By signing the CIPPE Form, the Authorized Medical examiner certifies that the student is physically fit to practice and participate in inter-school practices or scrimmages and contests in that (those) sport(s) approved by the student’s parent.

In certifying whether a student is physically fit to participate in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and contests in a particular sport(s), the Authorized Medical examiner (a) is expected to have or, if not already in possession of it, obtain, a working understanding of the physical requirements of the sport(s) in which the student is to Practice and participate; (b) should review a health history of the student; and (c) should perform a CIPPE appropriate for the sport(s) for which certification is being sought.

Any student who (1) previously participated in PIAA interscholastic athletic competition pursuant to a CIPPE; and (2) is seeking to participate in practices, inter-School practices, scrimmages, and contests in subsequent sport(s) in the same school year, must, prior to participation in the next sports season, complete and turn in to that student’s Principal the PIAA Recertification by parent/guardian form. The Principal, or Principal’s designee, of that student’s school, must review the Supplemental Health History of that student and make a determination as to whether that student should be re-evaluated and re-certified by an Authorized Medical Examiner.

The CIPPE shall be performed no earlier than June 1st and shall be effective regardless of when performed during a school year until the next May 31st.

### **B. Emergency Medical Authorization**

Each athlete’s parents shall complete an *Emergency Medical Authorization Card* giving permission for treatment by a physician or hospital when the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not available. This card will be kept in the medical kit for availability at all practices and contests.

### **C. Parental Acknowledgment of Athletic Policies**

Upon entering high school or when a student tries out for an athletic team, he/she will be presented with all the necessary forms and information for participating in athletics.

Each parent/guardian and athlete shall read all of the enclosed material and certify that they understand the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the school district. This signed document will be filed in the athletic director's office.

### **D. Scholastic Eligibility**

Only full-time students, regardless of age, may participate in scholastic athletics.

To be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition, a student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time curriculum. Where required, this curriculum or its equivalent must be approved by and conform to the regulations of the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania School Code and any local policies established by the local school board. The student must maintain an acceptable grade in such approved

curriculum as certified by the principal. Eligibility shall be cumulative from the beginning of a grading period and shall be reported on a weekly basis.

#### **In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics:**

- A student must pass **at least 4 full credit subjects**, or the equivalent, during the previous grading period. Prior work may be made up, providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the school.
- Any athlete declared ineligible may practice during the period of ineligibility but may not participate in scrimmages/contests with other schools, at any level.
- A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of twenty (20) days shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he or she has been in attendance for a total of forty-five (45) days following his/her twentieth day of absence. Attendance at summer school does not count toward the sixty days.
- Ninth-grade students are eligible to compete on varsity athletic teams, provided the decision is made at the beginning of each season and announced by the principal.
- Students may not practice or compete while under suspension.

#### **E. Risk of Participation**

All athletes and parents must realize the risk of serious injury which may be a result of athletic participation. Sto-Rox School District will use the following safeguards to make every effort to eliminate injury:

1. Conduct a parent/athlete meeting prior to the start of the season to fully explain the athletic policies and to advise, caution and warn parents/athletes of the potential for injury.
2. Maintain a continuing education program for coaches to learn the most up-to-date techniques and skills to be taught in their sport.
3. Instruct all athletes about the dangers of participation in their respective sports.

#### **F. Financial Obligations and Equipment**

All athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment issued to them. School-furnished equipment is to be worn only for contests and practice. All equipment not returned in good condition at the end of the season will be subject to a financial penalty.

### **STANDARD PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Instructions to Student Athletes**

1. Athletes will not be permitted in any area of the building after school except those areas designated by the coaches or athletic director.
2. No practice arrangements, formal or informal, are permitted without the presence of supervisory coaching personnel.
3. Athletes may not practice until proof of a physical exam is on file in the Athletic Office.
4. Athletes are responsible for the rules and regulations presented in this handbook.

#### **B. Emergency Phone Numbers**

- Sto-Rox High School - Principals Office - 412-771-3213 ext. 1050

- Sto-Rox Athletic Office - 412-771-3213 ext. 1340
- Emergency - 911

### **C. Injuries**

Following a serious injury, the coach must submit an injury report to the trainer within twenty-four hours. Furthermore, should a serious injury occur, the team doctor is consulted for appropriate disposition. A written statement from the physician and the parent or guardian must be submitted before the student resumes participation in practices or contests.

### **D. Trainer**

The athletic trainer will be responsible for the prevention and treatment of all athletic injuries. Students should report all injuries to the trainer immediately. If a trainer is not present during the injury, the student should report the injury to the coach. The coach will then follow the district emergency medical procedure.

### **E. Cancellation of Practice and Games Due to Inclement Weather**

1. All practices are canceled unless administrative approval is given.
  - Students cannot be required to attend an approved activity/practice during a school closing. Participation must be voluntary.
  - No outdoor practice should occur with lightning in the area.
2. All home activities involving spectators are canceled.
3. If an early dismissal occurs, all activities are canceled

### **F. Eligibility**

Athletes will be required to uphold academic excellence and integrity as an athlete representing the Sto-Rox School District. All athletes will have their academic progress checked weekly during their season.

- **Attendance**
  - An athlete absent from school will not participate in a scheduled game that day unless the athlete has pre-approval from the principal.
  - All student-athletes must be in school by **8:00 AM**, or they will be ineligible for games that day.
  - For students to be excused from classes during the school day for athletic events, they must be present from the beginning of the school day.
- **Academic Requirements**
  - Students will be ineligible if they have 1 failing grade -E
  - Students will be ineligible if they have 3 grades resulting in a D.
  - Athletes declared ineligible will not be permitted to play until they reach eligibility requirements approved by the Athletic Director.
- **Behavior** - An athlete may be declared ineligible at any time by the school board, school superintendent, or school principal for any behavior or conditions which may warrant such action after such behavior or conditions have been reviewed by the administrator, the athletic director, and the head coach of the activity involved.
  - **Suspensions** - Suspension from school is a serious matter. Students should realize that participation in extracurricular activities is a **privilege**, not a right. Individuals who participate in these activities have the honor of representing their school and community before the public. The school has the obligation to see that students exhibit the type of behavior and responsibility verifying this privilege.



- Any athlete or student involved in extracurricular activities that is suspended from school shall also be suspended from practicing, participating, or attending any event or game sponsored by the school during that suspension.
- Any student that has reached three (3) suspensions (in or out of school) or a total of eleven (11) days of suspension (resulting from Level 2 - Level 4 infractions in the student code of conduct) shall be ineligible to participate in any sport or activity and shall adhere to the following process:
  - Phase 1 of the suspension will be a mandatory 45 day period. During this 45-day period, the student will not be allowed to practice or participate in any game/tournament/events. The student must maintain or achieve a C or better grade in all core subjects and complete four (4) hours of pre-approved community service. The student shall not have any disciplinary referrals during this 45-day mandatory period. In the event the student falls below a C grade or has any disciplinary referrals, Phase 1 will immediately start over.
  - Upon successful completion, as determined by the Administration, of the mandatory 45-day Phase 1 period, the student will be permitted to rejoin practice sessions only. The student cannot play in any game/tournament/event. During this 45-day period (Phase 2), the student must continue to maintain a C or better grade in all core subjects and have no disciplinary referrals. In the event the student falls below a C grade or has any disciplinary referrals, Phase 2 will immediately start over.
  - Upon successful completion, as determined by the Administration, of both Phase 1 and Phase 2, the student will be permitted to return to full status as a student-athlete.
- Any student who engages in an activity that violates the Pennsylvania Criminal Code will be suspended from participation in any/all extracurricular activities until s/he is exonerated from any misconduct.

## G. Athletic Grading Policy and Tutoring Requirements

Below outlines the newly adopted Sto-Rox School District Athletic Grading Policy and Tutoring Requirements. Those who identify as an “athlete” are all students involved in a WPIAL-sanctioned sport, Sto-Rox Band members, including Vickettes, and Cheerleaders.

- If a student has **one or more E grades**, then the student becomes **immediately ineligible** to participate in their sport or activity until the **E grades** are brought up to a **D minimum**.
  - **Tutoring** at this level is **mandatory**. Once that occurs, the student can participate in the very next game or event.
- If a student has **three or more D grades**, then the student becomes **immediately ineligible** to participate in their sport or activity until **one D grade** is brought up to a **C minimum**.
  - **Tutoring** at this level is **mandatory**. Once that occurs, the student can participate in the very next game or event.
- If a student has **two D grades**, then the student **remains eligible** to participate in their sport or activity if the student meets the tutoring requirements.
  - **Tutoring** at this level is **mandatory**.

The teacher(s) providing tutoring services and the Athletic Director will notify the respective coach of a student’s eligibility to return to their sport or activity. Tutoring will take place after school on Monday - Thursday of each week.

Coaches of each sport and activity are required to inform each student in academic jeopardy on the Thursday of each week. Those students requiring tutoring are to begin the very next day on Wednesday. The student remains in tutoring until grades are brought up to the minimum acceptable level.

- Coaches, sponsors, and/or athletic director are responsible for seeing that students are participating in the tutoring program. Students not in attendance due to an absence must make alternative arrangements for the missed session.