Hartland Elementary School



Athletic Handbook for Students & Parents

(School Year 2026-2027)

Athletic Director: TBD

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Assistant Principal: Michael Schaeffer michael.schaeffer@wsesu.net

Philosophy

The goal of athletics is to provide all students enrolled in athletics with a healthy, positive, instructive, and fun activity. Athletic programs are designed to maximize opportunities to participate. While winning is a goal, the more important aims of the department are education, enjoyment, and growth and development (intellectual, social, and physical).

Athletics provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge outside of the classroom. Athletics are a valuable part of the diverse HES experience and an extension of the HES philosophy.

Requirements for Participation

Athletic Contract: The HES Athletic handbook must be read and the Athletic Contract signed stating that one will adhere to the policies and procedure of the handbook by all parties; student-athletes and parents/guardians. The contract must be turned into the Athletic Director before the beginning of the sports season.

Wellness Exam: A wellness exam by a licensed physician is required every two years. A Well Form must be completed, signed, and submitted to the Athletic Director (Rec Dept) and School Nurse prior to participation.

Vermont Principals' Association

Middle school sports fall under the Vermont Principals Association (VPA). Please review the VPA Middle School Policy Guide.

The **Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) Pregame Statement** (below) will be read at the beginning of each athletic event:

(Name of home school):_____ and (name of away school):_____, in conjunction with the Vermont Principals' Association, the Vermont Superintendents Association, and the Vermont State Athletic Directors Association requires participants and spectators to behave in a respectful manner. Sportsmanship and safe playing environments are the top priorities for all Vermont school-sponsored activities. This is especially true with respect to a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ethnic differences, or disabilities.
Under no circumstances should any student-athletes, officials, or coaches be subjected to behavior and/or language aimed to demean, disrespect or harm. If

behavior or hate speech of this kind is observed and/or reported, the site officials will stop the event immediately to meet with the coaches and the game officials about the next possible outcomes of violating this expectation, which could include:

- *Immediate ejection from the event*
- *Ending the event early and returning home*
- *Forfeiture of the event or future events*
- *Resuming the game without fans*
- *Scheduling future games without fans*
- *Restrictions/suspensions from future attendance/participation*

Adults and students are encouraged and expected to work together to ensure a meaningful and safe learning environment for our communities to grow and thrive together. Thank you to all participants for helping ensure the highest levels of respect and safety for all.

Procedures

Registration: Please register your student-athlete ahead of the season at the Hartland portal, and make sure all contact information is up to date.

Raising a Complaint/Concern: If a parent/guardian or athlete has a question or concern pertaining to athletics, the following steps should be taken:

1. Contact the coach (not right before or immediately after a game/contest) to set up a private meeting
2. Appeal to the Athletic Director
3. Appeal to the principal
4. Appeal to the superintendent of schools

If step 1 does not address your concern or answer your question, proceed to step 2 and so on until you feel you have the answer that addresses your concern.

Transportation: Athletes will be provided a bus to and from away games. If an athlete would like to ride home with a parent or guardian, the athlete must inform the coach and show the coach that his/her parent/guardian is there. If an athlete were to carpool home with someone other than their parent/guardian the coach would need a handwritten note from that athlete's parent/guardian saying who the athlete was allowed to go with after that game. The remainder of the students will take the bus back to HES, where they are to be picked up. The coaching staff is required to ride the bus to and from the game except if otherwise approved by the Athletic Director.

Equipment/Uniforms: All issued uniforms and equipment belong to Hartland Elementary School. Each student-athlete is responsible for all equipment and uniforms issued to them. They are expected to treat the equipment and uniforms with respect, to wear them with pride, and to represent the school in a positive manner. Students need to return all equipment and uniforms at the end of the season. If we do not receive the uniforms or equipment in a timely manner, that student/family will be charged at the replacement cost.

School Attendance: Student-athletes are expected to be in school and on time daily, this includes complying with school guidelines that are laid out in the Student Handbook. A student who is absent from school is ineligible to participate in athletics that day, unless approved and excused by the Athletic Director or administration. Any athlete serving a suspension may not participate in any game or practice on the same day(s) of their suspension.

Athletic Attendance: Regular and prompt attendance to all games and practices is important. Absences will be excused only for reasons that are excused by the school, following the policies outlined in the Student Handbook. Planned absences need to be presented and approved by the coach and/or the Athletic Director in advance. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, or getting help academically from a teacher or attending a school sponsored event. The coach and/from practice or the Athletic Director has final say when it comes to excusing an athlete from athletics. An unexcused absence from a game or excessive unexcused absence from practice could result in dismissal from the team.

Injuries: Please make sure to report any injury to the coach, Athletic Director or nurse, no matter how minor it may appear to be. Injured athletes who see a doctor may not return to practice or participate in games until cleared in writing by his/her doctor.

Dual Sport Participation: Student-athletes are allowed to participate in more than one sport during any given season with the approval of the Athletic Director and coaches involved.

Social Media: (Please see the Student Handbook)HES encourages safe and responsible use of social media and the Internet by all individuals; athletes, parents/guardians, coaches, etc. Social media such as Facebook, X (previously Twitter), Instagram, etc. should not be used as a form of communication between coaches, including volunteers, and athletes or their parents/guardians. Similarly, players and/or parents/guardians should not communicate through social media with coaches. Coaches will be provided with phone numbers and email addresses at

the beginning of the season. They should use these to communicate changes or anything else pertaining to the team.

Team Selection: HES Athletics strives to give all students the opportunity to participate in the sport(s) of their choosing. Depending on the season and sport the number of athletes may determine that a sport will have more than one team. The number of teams can vary from year to year, depending on how many athletes participate. The Athletic Director and coach(es) will discuss the best possible solution and proceed with a plan that is agreed upon. The plan will be communicated to all involved.

Playing Time: At the middle school level, athletes are still developing skills and learning the fundamentals of the sport. It is important that HES coaches provide opportunities for the student-athletes to thrive. Playing time philosophy is as follows: fair play for all players is encouraged. This being said, there are certainly factors that go into considering fair play. The student-athlete should strive to 'earn' playing time by consistently demonstrating good sportsmanship, respectful behavior, a positive attitude, and a strong work ethic. Decision on playing time is made by the coach and in the best interest of the team and players. If there are any issues, a player or parent should ask the coach to meet at a separate time to discuss the matter. A coach should never be approached after a game or practice, they should be contacted by phone or email. If the issue is not resolved please follow the Raising a Complaint/Concern procedure (above).

Inclement Weather: The Athletic Director will make the decision regarding cancellations of games and/or practices prior to 2:00pm on the weekdays. If the weather gets worse after 2:00pm it is the coach's responsibility to make the cancellation decision on practices. If school is canceled or is released early due to weather, all practices and games will be canceled as well.

Eligibility (Grades 7-8)

A student must be enrolled in the Hartland Elementary School or live within the town of Hartland. See p. 7 of the VPA MS Policy Guide for additional regulations.

WSESU has high expectations for our student-athletes and supports students in understanding the importance of a "school-comes-first" attitude.

There will be six scheduled eligibility checks throughout the year:

1. Monday, September 21, 2026
2. Monday, October 19, 2026
3. Monday, December 14, 2026* Eligibility will be reviewed before break

4. Monday, February 8, 2027
5. Monday, April 5, 2027
6. Monday, May 10, 2027

In addition to academics, the school and athletic administration reserve the right to consider student athletic eligibility when looking at school attendance or significant behavioral incidents. During a period of *ineligibility*, the student will not be permitted to dress for or participate in contests/competitions; however, the student will be permitted to practice and travel with the team.

The Hartland Elementary School holds our athletes to high behavioral standards both on and off the field. We expect that Hartland athletes represent their team and their school in a manner that demonstrates responsibility, dedication, and respect for themselves and others. If a student is serving a school *suspension*, they will not be eligible to participate in either practice or game. If a pattern of unacceptable behavior continues, a meeting will be called with the Athletic Director, administration, the student's parents/guardians, and the student to discuss possible next steps.

The athletic directors will contact the coaches to notify them of the status of their players by 2:00 p.m. on the Monday following the deadline date. Ineligibility status will be imposed for one week, effective immediately upon this notification.

Ineligible students have a one-week period to raise the grade(s) to a 2.5 or better. The athletic directors will review student progress after the week to make the determination regarding eligibility status and possible reinstatement.

If there are concerns about a student's academic performance, either during an eligibility check or at another point, the following will occur:

1. The teacher will speak with the student and family.
2. If a student continues to struggle to meet academic expectations, teachers, administration, the Athletic Director, and coaches will work with the student and family to create a plan to support academic progress.
3. If progress is still not made or the plan not followed, the student may be required to sit out practices and/or games until they get back on track.

Our goal is for all student-athletes at Hartland Elementary School to be able to participate in practices and games with their teammates. We as a school and athletic department will work with student-athletes to ensure they are given opportunities for success. The more effort being shown in the classroom, both academically and behaviorally, the less chance of any eligibility issues arising.

ATHLETIC CONTRACT

The goal of Hartland Elementary School's Athletic Handbook for Students & Parents is to bring a common understanding among students, parents/guardians and school staff regarding the essentials of being a part of a sports team at HES. The rules, policies, and procedures are set to assure that the goals of the HES sports teams are clear and fair for all who are involved. This handbook should serve as a resource for the student-athletes and their families.

The handbook will be reviewed, updated as necessary, and distributed every year. and it is expected that the contract is returned signed before an athlete is able to participate in any HES athletic program. We ask that all participants and parents read the handbook. Before a student-athlete can participate in practices or games, they and a parent/guardian must sign and return a copy of this contract, indicating full knowledge of the rules, regulations, and commitment that participation in sports programs at Hartland Elementary School means. It is important to note that any penalties outlined in the Handbook are minimum and more serious consequences could be given if needed. Dismissal from a team could occur if the situation arises and the coach, Athletic Director and/or principal feel that the action violates rules and policies set forth by the school and athletic department.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Athletic Handbook for Students & Parents, and I understand the policies and expectations stated.

Athlete Print & Sign Date

Parent/Guardian Print & Sign Date