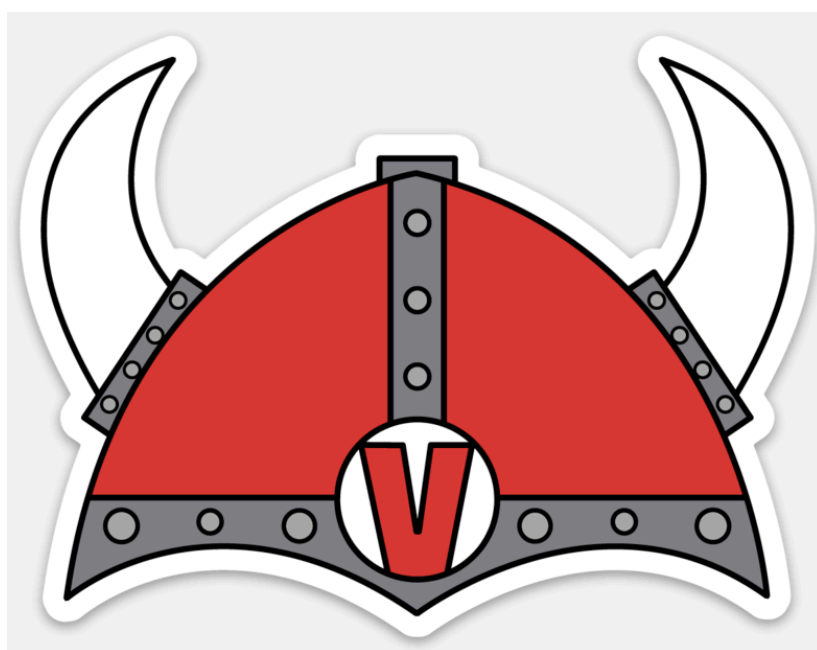


MSAD#8 VINALHAVEN SCHOOL

SPORTS & ACTIVITY

HANDBOOK



School Year 2025-2026

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Athletic Calendars](#)

[Athletic Goal and Objectives](#)

[Philosophy and Core Principles](#)

[Attendance and Tardiness:](#)

[Parent and Staff Communications](#)

[Advertising and Hiring](#)

[Pre-Season Meetings](#)

[Uniforms](#)

[Coaches](#)

[Coaching Certification](#)

[Evaluation of Coaches](#)

[Student Travel for Varsity Athletes](#)

[Code of Conduct for Middle and High School Student](#)

[Disciplinary Action](#)

[Appeal of Suspension from Activity / Team](#)

[Activity/Team Leadership Positions](#)

[Academic Eligibility](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

Introduction

August 2025

This document will serve as the Vinalhaven School Sports & Activity Handbook. It is an overview of the policies and procedures related to the sports and activity program that will be reviewed annually. Many of our students participate in extracurricular activities, and the policies and procedures here will serve as a guide to the non-classroom activities here at school. Complementing this document are sport-specific guidelines for some of our sports.

Attending school is a right; participating in sports is a privilege. Thus, student-athletes, in many cases, need to meet higher standards than other students to participate in athletics due to our participation in the MPA leagues. Please contact our Athletic Director, Deja Doughty, if you have questions or concerns about anything in this handbook.

Athletic Calendars

The schedules for each sport will be posted here. Please know that these calendars are subject to change. These schedules will be live during the season, so you will have the opportunity to see changes as they are made.

As of 6 Aug 2025

Changes since last revision in red

2025 Vinalhaven Soccer Season

High School Varsity				
Date	Opponent	Girl's Start	Boy's Start	Ferry Times
08 Sept (Mon)	HOME Valley	11AM	12:30PM	
09 Sept (Tues)	AWAY Islesboro		Boys Only	8:45 AM/4:30 PM
13 Sept (Sat)	AWAY Rangeley		12 Noon	8:45 AM/2:45 PM
17 Sept (Wed)	HOME Wiscasset			
20 Sept (Sat)	HOME Carrabec	12:30 PM	2 PM	
23 Sept (Tues)	HOME Pine Tree	12:30 PM	2 PM	
27 Sept (Sat)	AWAY Greenville			
6 Oct (Mon)	AWAY Telstar			
11 Oct (Sat)	HOME Temple			
13 Oct (Mon)	AWAY Richmond	Girls Only		

Busline (Grades 5-8)			
Date	Opponent	Start Time	Ferry Times
08 Sept (Mon)	AWAY Jefferson		
10 Sept (Wed)	HOME Nobleboro		
TBD	HOME South Bristol		
15 Sept (Mon)	AWAY Bristol		
17 Sept (Wed)	AWAY Boothbay		
22 Sept (Mon)	HOME Jefferson		
11 Sep 24 (Wed)	AWAY Nobleboro		

29 Sept (Mon)	AWAY South Bristol		
1 Oct (Wed)	HOME Bristol		
3 Oct (Fri)	HOME Boothbay		

Athletic Goal and Objectives

Our Goal – Sports at Vinalhaven are a continuation of classroom values such as citizenship, sportsmanship, teamwork, and patience that are taught and reinforced.

Objectives –

- **To Be Successful** - Student-athletes do not always win, but they succeed when they continually strive to do so. Students can learn to accept defeat only by striving to win with earnest dedication. Develop a desire to excel.
- **Sportsmanship** - Some qualities of an ideal sportsman are determination, optimization, stamina, perseverance, and decisiveness.
- **Personal Improvement** - Student athletes' should strive for continual improvements in the practice of their sport. Not only physical but emotional as well.
- **To Develop Personal Health Habits** - As a continuation of the Physical Education curriculum, the development of lifelong health habits is very important.

Philosophy and Core Principles

- Athletic participation must be healthful, positive, and safe for everyone involved, conducted in an environment that teaches values and ethics, strengthens the community, promotes competition without conflict, and enriches the lives of the athletes.
- Learning and personal growth for the foundation for interscholastic and intramural sports.
- Parents and the community are actively involved in creating and supporting an environment that fosters positive athletic experiences for student-athletes.
- The coach is the key to making the student-athlete experience appropriate, positive, and educational.
- Each student who meets the eligibility standards has the opportunity to participate and learn through sports.

- Participation in sports builds self-confidence while teaching good health and fitness habits to last a lifetime.
- High-quality athletic programs are built upon a foundation of strong leadership, clear policy, adequate resources, and effective organization.
- In the interest of helping students meet expectations in both school and community sports teams, it is suggested that coaches communicate with community teams about the [Code of Conduct](#) guidelines and challenges that occur during the season outside of school that may impact players while at school.
- In the effort to minimize the loss of instructional time, student athletes will miss class time for warmups, the game, and debriefing. They will then return to classes if school is in session.

Attendance and Tardiness:

- A student must be present at school to participate in a practice, game, or co-curricular event on that respective day/night. If prior plans have been made, and/or a medical note is provided to the Principal or Athletic Director, the student *may* be able to participate.
- Students must be in school for a minimum of three hours of the school day to be eligible to participate that day. If a student must leave early due to illness or chooses to skip a class, they will *not* be able to participate in after-school activities.
- If a student is at school, s/he shall attend practice that day unless prior arrangements have been made or if it is an excused absence.
- Athletes are expected to be at practice on time.

Parent and Staff Communications

Communication parents should expect from their child's coach:

- Time and dates of practices and games.
- The coach's philosophy.
- The expectations the coach has for all the players.
- Requirements to be a part of the team, i.e., special equipment, off-season conditioning.
- If your child is injured during participation.
- Any disciplinary actions of your child that results in removal from participation.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
- Skill improvement and development.
- Concerns about your student athlete's behavior.

Concerns that are not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

- Playing time.
- Team strategy.
- Play calling.
- Other students/athletes.

Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach before contacting the athletic director. Parents who continue to have concerns after speaking with the coach and athletic director may contact the administration.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance.

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, use the following procedure:

- Set up a time to speak first.
- Think about what you expect to accomplish as a result of the meeting.
- Stick to discussing the facts.
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, during, or following a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach.

If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution:

- Set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
- At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

Advertising and Hiring

Please use this link for the School Board Policy: [Hiring procedure for coach positions](#).

Coaching positions at Vinalhaven School are filled according to school board policy. Coaching and activity positions are one-year positions. Before each season, the Athletic Director will post positions. Coaches who have coached successfully in the previous year will normally be given the opportunity to return to their positions, and their positions need not be advertised.

If interested in an advertised position, applicants should submit a letter of interest to the Business Manager. Preference will be given to staff members of the Vinalhaven School.

The Athletic Director will be responsible for filling all vacant positions and is responsible for following up on all letters of interest. The Athletic Director is also responsible for

interviewing candidates. At the Varsity level, the Athletic Director will form a representative committee to interview candidates.

Extra-curricular positions may include:

Fall

Boys and Girls Varsity Soccer Coach and Assistant Coach	Coed Middle School soccer Coach and Assistant Coach
Varsity rowing Coach and Assistant Coach	Math Team advisor

Winter

Girls and Boys Varsity basketball Coach and Assistant Coach	Girls and Boys Middle school basketball Coach and Assistant Coach
---	---

Spring

Girls Varsity Softball Coach and Assistant Coach	Boys Varsity Baseball Coach and Assistant Coach
--	---

The offering of extracurricular activities is dependent upon the availability of instructors, student participation and School Board approval.

Pre-Season Meetings

The Athletic Director will meet with varsity athletes and their parents at the start of each sports season. The meeting will be announced in the Wind and held in the gym. All student-athletes, coaches, and parents will attend the meeting. The Athletic Director will review the general athletic and transportation policies at Vinalhaven School. Five criteria need to be in place for a student-athlete to participate in a varsity sport:

1. Parent consent form signed and returned. (Co-curricular/Extracurricular Contract)

2. A physical exam needs to be completed every two years and should be on file at the Medical Center for all students in grades 9-12. If a student has never played a varsity sport before, he/she should get a physical before the start of his/her first sport season. If a student plays a variety of sports, he/she needs to get a yearly physical and will have until the 2nd week of the competition part of the season to comply.
3. The student needs to turn in a completed emergency form that will be on file in the school office.
4. Academic eligibility standards need to be met to participate in a sport.
5. Attendance at the pre-season meeting is required.

After the school policies are explained and questions from parents and students are answered, the Athletic Director will turn the meeting over to the coaches, who will meet with their teams and review any sport-specific rules and procedures. Coaches will pass out schedules and/or training guidelines. The pre-season meetings will occur in August, November, and March.

Uniforms/Equipment

Uniforms will be issued for each sport. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to keep track of the uniform during the entire sports season, to wash it after every game, and to return it to the coach at the end of the season. Uniforms should be returned within a week of the end of the sports season. The post-season team meeting or the athletic banquets are good opportunities to turn in uniforms.

Uniforms are quite costly to buy and even more costly to replace. If the uniform is lost, the student-athlete will be charged the replacement cost, which is often higher than the original cost.

The coach is responsible for collecting uniforms and equipment at the end of the season and turning them in, clean, to the Athletic Director. Coaches will not be paid their stipend until the Athletic Director tells the Business Manager that all uniforms are accounted for in that particular sport. This rule goes for all sports.

Coaches

After receiving recommendations from the Athletic Director, the Superintendent will hire the coaches, and assistant coaches, share this information with the School Board, and the School Board will be informed of coaches. Coaches will be responsible for all aspects of their teams, including traveling with the team, practices, supervision during away games, and actual coaching.

Occasionally, a team will request the assistance of a volunteer coach during practices to help out with management, strategy, or teaching a skill. Volunteer coaches, such as parents or older students, must be fingerprinted and can participate with the team only once or twice during the season per MPA rules. The coach must clear this request for volunteer assistance with the Athletic Director. Also, during a game, volunteer coaches will not be allowed to sit on the bench with the players.

Coaching Certification

To coach at the high school level, the coach must be certified by the MPA and complete the coaching course through the Maine Center for Sport and Coaching at the University of Maine before the coach's second season. Additionally, before the coach's second season, the coach must complete a local CPR course which can be scheduled with the Athletic Director, as part of the MPA certification. Also, a coach must be a high school graduate and at least 20 years old. Middle school coaches are encouraged to be certified.

In addition, all coaches hired as high school coaches in activities governed by the MPA must meet all coach's eligibility requirements established by the MPA and must agree to follow the [MPA Code of Ethics](#), local Board policies, and local athletic department administrative regulations.

No applicant will be hired as a coach or assistant coach without MDOE approval, including fingerprinting and criminal background check requirements.

Evaluation of Coaches

Coaching is a special kind of teaching. A coach not only teaches, refines, and reinforces skills but is a role model for student-athletes. Beyond knowledge of rules and fundamentals, a good coach will have organizational, communication, motivational, and teaching skills. Additionally, a well-qualified coach:

- Understands that, first and foremost, he/she is a teacher.
- Is sensitive to the needs of maturing adolescents and assists in their physical, academic, social, and emotional development.
- Recognizes that students are diverse in their characteristics and backgrounds, including age, gender, size, and culture, and adjusts his/her approach accordingly.
- Has a realistic sense of the level at which student-athletes should be expected to perform.

- Promotes sportsmanship, self-discipline, and respect, both on and off the playing field, for coaches, teammates, referees, spectators, and opponents.
- Communicates in a positive manner.
- Encourages competitive spirit but not a win-at-all-costs attitude.
- Provides a fair opportunity for students to participate in competitions.
- Recognizes the difference between developmental sports programs and more intensive varsity-level sports.
- Recognizes the need for balance in the lives of student-athletes, including academic, family, and social needs.
- Is a role model for his/her team members and the community.
- Coaches must sign a [form](#) indicating that they have read and understood this Sports Handbook.

Student Travel for Varsity Athletes

Because of our unique island setting, Vinalhaven student-athletes often travel overnight to away games. This adds an additional layer of organization, responsibility, and accountability for both student-athletes and coaches. Here are the guidelines and procedures for travel:

- Student-athletes must travel with their team to the away game. Traveling with the team means going on the bus to the game with the coaches and staying at the hotel, school, or residence where the entire team will be staying.
- Exceptions to these travel requirements may be made in extraordinary cases with prior approval of the coach and the school Principal. The student-athlete may be picked up after the game by a parent or legal guardian, provided that the parent asks permission from the coach and provides a written note confirming this arrangement. A student-athlete may be picked up by an adult who is not the parent/guardian if there is a written note from the parent/guardian requesting this and if the Principal has previously approved it before the team left Vinalhaven.
- Team curfews will be in place when student-athletes are traveling. The coach will set times. Any student-athlete who breaks curfew shall be suspended from the team for one week.
- When traveling overnight and missing school, student-athletes must keep their teachers informed and will need to fill out a planned absence form from the front office. It is the student athlete's responsibility to remain caught up in all of his/her classes.
- When traveling, common sense rules apply concerning respect, patience, kindness, empathy, sportsmanship, dignity, accountability, politeness, integrity, and a positive attitude.

- Whenever possible, the boys' team and coaches will stay to watch the girls play and vice-versa, to support each other. Student-athletes will only make supportive comments to other players on both teams.
- When traveling on the ferry, there will be no sitting in vehicles.
- A coach's protocol [checklist](#) for away games can be found at the end of this document.
- Coaches will keep track of the student-athletes at all times when traveling and when going into stores and restaurants. No student-athlete should ever be alone. Coaches should travel with the team to and from games. When this is not possible, one coach (head or assistant) will be sufficient for coverage. A parent cannot substitute for a coach's chaperone responsibility. If, for whatever reason, a coach is not available to travel with the team, the Principal will appoint another school employee temporarily.
- It is the Athletic Director's responsibility to maintain a current list for the front office of all players attending the game.
- Student-athletes returning from an away trip on a school day will go directly to the school upon reaching Vinalhaven if school is in session.

TOURNAMENT PLAY: The school will pay for one tournament dinner not to exceed \$25.00 per student if the team is required to spend the night at the tournament site. Additional dinners, if necessitated by the length of the tournament, will be at the family's expense. The business office will secure lodging for the players, coach, and assistant coach. Normally, the office will book a hotel/motel that serves free breakfast. Any other circumstances regarding travel will be left to the discretion of the school administration.

Code of Conduct for Middle and High School Student

Since participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities is a privilege, it is important that students, parents/guardians, and other interested persons are aware of the following rules and regulations. As representatives of the schools, students are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. These rules are put in place to support the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students and promote healthy, enriching, and safe co- and extracurricular opportunities for all students.

- Students in good standing may participate in co- and extracurricular activities. A student is considered in good standing if he/she is not the subject of any

disciplinary action for violating any policy or school rule and is currently academically eligible based on MPA and school guidelines.

- All participants are expected to attend school ready to learn on all scheduled school days. Any student who misses any portion of the school day unexcused (including the third occurrence of an unexcused tardy in a semester) may NOT participate in co- and extracurricular activities. Also, all students (even with excused absences) must attend at least 3 hours of a school day to participate in after-school events. Students who go home sick will *not* be able to participate in after-school activities. Any exceptions to this requirement must be **pre-approved** by the Principal.
- Students suspended from school shall not practice, participate, attend, or compete in extra- or co-curricular activities (including tryouts and auditions) during the days of suspension.
- Students must abide by all Board policies, school rules, and any additional rules and/or training guidelines imposed by coaches or advisors. Any additional rules and/or training guidelines must be consistent with Board policies and be approved by the Athletic Director or Activities Director.
- Student use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs is illegal and negatively affects student health, safety, and performance. Students participating in co- and extra-curricular activities may not engage in the prohibited behaviors and activities described in Policy [JICH \(Student Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use\)](#).
- Students are expected to conduct themselves not to discredit themselves, their team or organization, their coach or advisor, and their school. If a student is charged with a crime, he or she may be suspended from participation in co- or extra-curricular activities until the case is adjudicated.
- A student convicted of a crime may be suspended from participation in activities for a time to be determined based on the facts of the particular case.

Disciplinary Action

Improper conduct, as determined by the Athletic Director/coach or administration, shall result in disciplinary action up to and including removal/suspension from the team or activity (in addition to any discipline imposed under applicable Board policies or school rules). The Athletic Director and coaches/advisors are expected to enforce all policies and school rules at all times and to use their best judgment in applying penalties for violations. The advisor or coach shall consult with the Athletic Director or Administrator before suspending a student from an activity or team.

Disciplinary action in this section pertains to infractions by a student participant that occurs during their sports season or co-curricula season. An infraction involving the

use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol will be verifiable through law enforcement or judicial reports, by self-admission of the student, or by Vinalhaven staff direct observation or verified third-party report.

For infractions involving drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco, disciplinary action will be taken as specified below. Repeat or extreme violations will warrant administrative review and additional sanctions. Violations are cumulative during a student's middle school career but do not carry over to high school unless the MS student is in a Varsity Sport or HS-sponsored activity. Violations during a student's high school career are cumulative but apply within one season, not for all grades 9-12. Eighth-grade students who make a varsity team need to adhere to varsity rules.

Tobacco or Vape device violations

First violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for one week (7 calendar days). The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Social Worker before returning to the activity.

Repeat violations: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks (14 calendar days). The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Social Worker before returning to the activity.

Drug and alcohol violations

First violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks (14 calendar days) or duration of any extended out-of-school suspension. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Social Worker.

Second violation: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for 30 calendar days. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Social Worker before returning to the activity.

Repeat violations: No participation in co- and/or extra-curricular activities for 60 calendar days. The student and his/her parent must participate in a meeting with an administrator and the Social Worker before returning to the activity.

Violation suspensions occurring near the end of the school year shall carry over to the next year.

Violations accumulate over a student's 8th – 12th-grade academic career. For example, if a student has a drinking violation in 9th grade, s/he will be suspended for co and/or extra-curricular activities for two weeks. If the same student has another violation in 11th

grade, that violation will be considered the **second** violation, and the student will be suspended from co-and/or extra-curricular activities for 30 calendar days.

Self-Reporting of Violation By the Student

A student who violates Policy [JICI](#) can report his/her violation to the Athletic Director or Activity Director by noon of the following school day. In such a case, the disciplinary action specified in the preceding section will be cut in half. This provision cannot be used to avoid discipline under this policy for a violation that has already been reported to the school or to avoid discipline for violations of Policy [JICH](#), Student Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use.

Appeal of Suspension from Activity / Team

A student who wishes to appeal a suspension from a team/activity must first discuss the matter with his/her advisor or coach.

Following that discussion, if the student and his/her parent/guardian wish to appeal the suspension, it must be done in writing to the Athletic Director within three school days of notice of the suspension decision. The Athletic Director will investigate as he/she deems advisable and render a decision, in writing, to the student.

If the student and his/her parent/guardian are dissatisfied with this decision, the decision may be appealed in writing to the Principal within three school days. The Principal will conduct whatever investigation he/she deems advisable and render a decision, in writing, to his/her parents within a reasonable time. The Principal's decision is final.

The student shall remain under suspension during the appeal process.

Activity/Team Leadership Positions

A student elected to a leadership position for an activity/team forfeits that position. This meeting shall be facilitated by the Social Worker and Administrator and attended by the Athletic Director and the coach/advisor. A final decision will be made by the coach/Athletic Director, taking into consideration the recommendation for the student. A second violation at any time during the student's middle or high school career will result in the loss of any leadership designation held.

Academic Eligibility

It is our desire that all students participate in and enjoy the wide variety of co- and extracurricular opportunities offered at Vinalhaven School. As members of this school and community, it brings us enormous pride to watch our young people perform and/or compete. However, situations may arise that take precedence over these activities, such as academic performance, attendance, and behavior. The Maine Principals' Association (MPA) outlines in detail [eligibility requirements](#) (page 13) for statewide sports competitions. Vinalhaven School concurs with these rules.

It is necessary to define further co-curricular eligibility based on academic standings. Our primary purpose at Vinalhaven School is to provide education; co-curricular aspects of the school experience are desirable but secondary. Sports and other activities should not interfere or compete with learning. Thus, students desiring to participate in these activities must demonstrate they are able to maintain satisfactory academic standards as measured by class grades.

1. Every two weeks, starting the 3rd week of school, the athletic director will review student grades. This will occur on Monday (or the first school day of the week) and if a student's cumulative grade in two active courses falls below a passing level (74.5%), the participant will be on probation for one week. Students, parents, and the administration will be notified if a student is on probation. Probation means that a student is still eligible to participate for one week. At the end of the one-week probation, the student must be passing all but one class. Students will be encouraged to make a plan with each teacher to identify specifically what school work needs to be accomplished and to request options for help.
2. Students will be considered ineligible if they continue to have 2 failing grades after the week on probation. Students will remain ineligible as long as they have 2 failing grades.
 - a. Ineligible students can regain their eligibility at any time if that student brings their grade up to a passing level and they are no longer failing two courses.
 - b. Students can regain eligibility if it was determined the reason for a student being ineligible is due to a grading error or a delay in entering grades into PowerSchool.
 - c. Students will not become ineligible while they are away on a school-sponsored athletic event. If a student is on an athletic trip that takes them away from Vinalhaven and they become ineligible while they are away—the ineligibility restriction does not take effect until they return back to Vinalhaven.

d. Exceptions to any of the eligibility procedures will require administrative approval.

3. Students who are ineligible will adhere to the following restrictions:

a. Academically ineligible students WILL NOT participate in competitions (official games or scrimmages) played against other schools.

b. Academically ineligible students WILL NOT travel off the island with their teams.

c. Academically ineligible students WILL participate in local practices and other team activities at the coach's discretion.

d. Academically ineligible students WILL be allowed to sit on the bench during home games at the coach's discretion but NOT be allowed to dress out in their game uniforms or miss class time.

The principal may make special considerations for students on a case-by-case basis as needed for extra curricular activities with limited performance or competitions.

Varsity team head coaches are responsible for ensuring all of their players and players' parents are aware of academic eligibility concerns each Monday (or the first school day of the week).

Appendix 1

COACHES' CHECKLIST FOR AWAY GAMES

- ☐ Talk to the team before going away about expectations and information. Athletes must fill out planned absent forms.
- ☐ Double-check boat time, and communicate to the team.
- ☐ When leaving school early for the ferry boat, students will not ride with other students unless they are siblings.
- ☐ Have the correct headcount for ferry personnel.
- ☐ Have a coach in each cabin. Coaches should also supervise any students who are up top.
- ☐ When the ferry docks, ensure the cabins are clean and all supplies are collected. Similar when riding a bus.
- ☐ Be ready to load the bus when getting off the ferry.
- ☐ Coaches will agree to seat arrangements before getting on the bus.
- ☐ If staying in private homes, players know coaches' cell phone numbers, and coaches know players' cell phone numbers.
- ☐ After the game, make sure that locker rooms, fields, and bench areas are picked up.

- ☐ The coach should go over courtesy and expectations, lights-out time, no leaving rooms, quiet for others, wake-up times, etc. as applicable.

Active links:

Hiring of coaches policy
Sports handbook Form for coaches to sign
Student drug alcohol policy JICH
MPA Handbook for sports eligibility
JICI (Policy)