

AF Providence High School
Athletics Handbook 2023-24



Principal: Aja Davis

Athletic Administrator: Josh Lombardi

Asst. Athletic Administrator: Chris Batzinger

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***Items in this Handbook are subject to change.**

Eligibility of Student-Athletes

All teams are governed by the eligibility rules implemented by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League, ***Rules and Regulations*** (Article 3). Parents, students, and coaches should familiarize themselves with this rule book: found at www.riil.org.

Eligibility for student-athletes at AF Providence High is stated as follows:

Eligibility for Team

- Must have valid physical within last (12 months) on file with school nurse.
- Passing 6/8 classes at the end of the Quarter prior to the start of the season
 - Fall Sports - Prior year Quarter 4 grades
 - Winter Sports - Quarter 1 grades
 - Spring Sports - Quarter 2 grades
- Assumption of Risk Form
- Completed online registration

Eligibility for Competition

- Student-athletes **MUST** maintain a passing grade in 6 of 8 classes during the season.
- Student-athletes **ARE REQUIRED** to be in **100% compliance** of dress code every day **by 8:30am**. Student-athletes not in dress code **CANNOT** attend practices, games, or competitions on days they are not in dress code.

Parents, guardians, and student-athletes are expected to review and refer to the rules in the *AF Providence High Athletics Handbook* to insure the eligibility of the student-athletes.

Special attention should be given to the following items:

- A student-athlete is required to attend school the day of an athletic contest, event, or practice.
- In order to be eligible for a practice or contest, the student-athlete must be in school by the start of the third period of the day unless approved by the Principal and Athletic Director.

- A student-athlete should not be absent from school the day before or the day following an athletic contest. A student-athlete that is absent from school the day before or after an athletic contest should have a valid excuse written by a parent or guardian and acceptable by the Principal and Athletic Director.
- Behavior in school or public unbecoming of a student-athlete at AF Providence High could result in temporary suspension or permanent removal from athletic privileges and team participation.
- **Extracurricular Activity Suspension:** Any AF Providence High student with a violation, or repeated violation, of the rules and regulations stated in the *AF Providence High Student Handbook* may be suspended from attendance and/or participation in, any extracurricular (social, arts, clubs, and/or athletic) activities for a period of time as determined by the Leadership Team and Athletic Director.
- During any suspension, a student is not allowed to participate in any school-related activities (including vacation periods and weekends) until the suspension period is completed. A suspension ends at midnight on the final day of the suspension period.
- Any student(s) transferring to Providence High School or transferring from Providence High School need to follow the RIIL transfer management system process and all RIIL policies that can be found on RIIL.org or by contacting the RIIL office.

Student-Athlete Guidelines and Expectations

Every student-athlete, and parent or guardian of every student-athlete, are required to read the *AF Providence High Athletics Handbook*, and **sign the acceptance of it.**

Parents or guardians and student-athletes must read and sign the *Rhode Island Interscholastic League's Assumption of Risk Form*. *Note: this only has to be completed once during a student-athlete's 4 years of high school.*

Every student-athlete must maintain academic and behavioral eligibility as stated above in the *AF Providence High Athletics Handbook*.

Extracurricular Activity Suspension: Any AF Providence High student with a violation, or repeated violation, of the rules and regulations stated in the *AF Providence High Student Handbook* may be suspended from attendance and/or participation in, any extracurricular (social, arts, clubs, and/or athletic) activities for a period of time as determined by the Leadership Team and Athletic Director.

During any suspension, a student is not allowed to participate in any school-related activities (including vacation periods and weekends) until the suspension period is completed. A suspension ends at midnight on the final day of the suspension period.

Any player ejected from a game will be subject to the penalties imposed by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League. Whatever penalty the RIIL imposes, AF Providence High will match and the student-athlete will have to sit out the total of both suspensions.

Student-athletes are required to remember at all times that they represent AF Providence High and AF Providence High Athletics. They should wear their uniform proudly. Athletics is a privilege, not a requirement.

Vulgarity (words or gestures) at practice or competition will not be tolerated and is subject to suspension or dismissal from the athletic program.

Alcohol/Drug Use

Any student-athlete who presents themselves in an unethical or immoral manner in school, competition, community, social media, or the internet is subject to suspension or dismissal from the athletic program. If an AF Providence High student-athlete is shown to be in the presence of alcohol or any controlled substances in any medium (photo, video, etc.), they are subject to the same sanctions.

The use of alcohol, controlled substances, or steroids will result in suspension or dismissal from the athletic program. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian(s) to provide treatment for the student-athlete. Student athletes are considered in violation of this policy if they possess, are illegally in the presence of, consume (including being under the influence of) and/or distribute, other than as prescribed by a physician for personal use, any tobacco product, controlled drug and/or intoxicant, or steroid at any time. This violation will be enforced whether during the school day, at any school activity, on school property, or at locations off school property.

Players will attend practice in proper attire as indicated by the team's coach. At no time should a student-athlete be shirtless during practice. All student-athletes should be wearing appropriate and modest practice gear - sleeveless tops are acceptable; but spaghetti straps are prohibited. No student-athlete should be wearing any article of clothing that represents

another school's team, mascot, or logo. Student-athletes need to be dressed in school colors for every practice.

Each athlete is responsible for the security of their own equipment and uniform. If any piece of issued equipment or uniform is lost, the player and family are responsible for restitution. The athlete will not be allowed to compete in any other activities until restitution is completed.

No equipment or uniforms should ever be left on the field or court.

Any student-athlete who is disrespectful to a member of the coaching staff or a game official, will be subject to suspension or dismissal from the athletic program.

Any student-athlete caught stealing or vandalizing school property, or that of another school, will be dismissed from the athletic program.

Every student-athlete is subject to AF Providence High School's behavioral policies.

If a player is absent from school on the day of a game or practice, the player will not be allowed to participate. Exceptions are noted and must be approved by the Leadership Team.

The team's Head Coach and Athletic Director should be notified of all injuries. In particular, notified of all injuries which require medical attention.

Injured players should attend practice. **If they are considered a member of the team, they should be at practice, contributing in whatever way possible.** In the event an injured player is unable to attend (receiving medical treatment), the approval of the head coach is required.

These guidelines should be saved and referred to throughout the year. If there is a question about a student's participation you should contact Aja Davis (Principal) or Josh Lombardi (Athletic Director)

Progress Reports

Student-athletes at AF Providence High may be required to complete a weekly progress report throughout their season(s). A weekly report will be pulled by the Athletic Director and Leadership Team, to determine a student-athlete's eligibility for games/competitions. Student-athletes who fail the weekly progress report, will be deemed academically ineligible for all games/competitions until they meet eligibility requirements.

Academically ineligible means a student-athlete will be limited in dressing, playing, or performing in games, competitions, or team events. Academically ineligible student-athletes are allowed to participate in practice as long as behavior and social norms are being met.

Passing a progress report means that a student-athlete will remain **academically eligible** for their sport, meaning, full participation in practices, games, competitions, etc.

Please see below for how student-athletes can pass or fail a progress report.

Pass	Fail
Passing 6/8 classes	Failing more than 2 classes (F)
Maximum of 2 classes below D- (F)	Behavior that is unbecoming of a PHS student athlete
Positively represents team	

* All of the requirements in the *Pass* section must be met for a student to pass their progress report and remain academically eligible.

* If any of the items in the *Fail* section are true, a student-athlete will be **academically ineligible** until all requirements in the *Pass* section are met.

* Behavior concerns will be handled on a *case by case* basis and is at the discretion of the Leadership Team and Athletic Director.

Expectations of Parents/Guardians of AF Providence High School Student-Athletes

AF Providence High suggests parents and/or guardians of our student-athletes to model positive support, care, encouragement, and sportsmanship to the student-athletes and their teams, coaches, school, and opponents.

In order to create such habits, AF Provident High recommends that all parents and/or guardians take the free course provided by the National Federation of High Schools, **Positive Sport Parenting**. The course can be found at www.nfhslearn.com:
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/positive-sport-parenting>

The course is free and available to anyone.

If it is brought to the attention of the AF Providence High School Leadership Team and/or Athletic Director that a parent and/or guardian acted inappropriately or in a way that negatively reflects our school at an athletic contest, **we can mandate that the parent take the course and provide the certificate of completion** before said parent is allowed to attend another school event. If they refuse, the student-athlete will be held out of all competitions until the parent and/or guardian has completed the course.

In the case of a parent or guardian who has been ejected from any athletic venue, our school **will mandate** that parent or guardian to complete the **Positive Sport Parenting** course before their student-athlete will be allowed to participate in the athletic program.

AF Providence High believes it is important to create and foster an environment of healthy competition and needs parent and/or guardians help to do so.

Helpful Tips:

Provide positive support, care, and encouragement to **ALL** student-athletes, their teams, coaches, and schools.

Respect the position, professionalism, and decisions of game officials; whether you agree or disagree with them.

Refrain from the use of foul language.

Refrain from yelling criticism at any student-athlete and their coaches and team.

Cheer positively to support, not negatively to bring down.

The following, *POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS*, is taken from the ***DePaul College Prep High School's Athletic Department Handbook for Parents and Students***.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Player-Coach Relationship: All too often during athletic events, situations arise where many adults become too involved in the game in progress, professing to know more than the coaches or even the officials in charge. While this expertise may heighten a person's appreciation for a particular sport, it in no way changes the status of the individual as a parent-spectator. You should be there only to observe and enjoy the athletic performance. The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical of all relationships in athletics. Parents can have a very profound effect upon this important and delicate balance. While you as a parent may not agree with all decisions a coach may make, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child. If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember he or she may carry your convictions to the next practice or game. This in turn can lead to a player-coach confrontation. You as a parent have great influence upon this delicate relationship. Please allow the coaches to do the job for which they were hired. Coaches are expected to be leaders to their players and role models for their players. They are expected to teach and guide the players who play for them. They are not there to be friends or buddies. Coaches must demand respect from their players and give respect to their players in return. Concepts such as integrity, and character, and sportsmanship provide the foundation upon which our coaching philosophy is based.

Parent-Coach Relationship: As a parent you obviously want what is best for your child. Allowing the coach to guide and instruct the team is crucial. Again, you are asked to please allow the coach to do his/her job. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately after a game. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities, and it may be a very emotional moment. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm and logical manner. For many coaches, one of the post-game responsibilities is to meet with his/her players. Athletes should not be expected to stop and talk to parents and friends immediately after a game is over. These

team meetings are essential to the learning process and are important in efforts to build team unity and understanding.

Parent-Player Relationship: Sometimes parents may try to re-live their own athletic memories through the real-life athletic efforts of their children. Being positive and supportive is very important but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations may be extremely harmful. Allow your child to enjoy and to grow and to take responsibility for his/her athletic experiences. Encourage your child to give 100% effort and to become a team player, not an individual statistic seeker. In the end, it is the child's perception of the game that really matters, not that of the parents.

Relationship with Game Officials: It is often the case that if a game is seemingly leaning toward one side over the other, irate fans will infer an unfair advantage given by the officials. The home school does not select the officials. The RIIL Assignor schedules all officials and neither team has a say in which officials are assigned to a given game or contest. Game officials agree to and follow a code of conduct and ethics. They really do not have a vested interest in which team emerges victorious. It is very essential to understand that officials are an integral part of the game. While you may not agree with all of their calls, please do not harass and taunt game officials. Parents are supposed to be good role models for their children. Remember that officials are in charge of the game and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. Many times a given team may see the same officials on several occasions throughout the course of a season. Coaches, Athletic Administrators and School Administrators work hard to establish good working relationships with game officials, which can be easily damaged or destroyed by spectator interference. **So please let the players play, let the coaches coach, let the officials officiate, and let the spectators be positive.**

Procedure for Athletic Complaints

All coaches, student-athletes, and parents/guardians are expected to read and follow the guidelines below. Differences of opinions and methods occur in all instances in life; athletics is no exception. In order to create an environment where reasonable expression of differences can be heard and discussed, the following procedures have been put in place to establish a line of communication between school, parent/guardians, student-athletes, and coaches.

AF Providence High Athletic Staff, student-athletes, and parents/guardians are responsible for following these procedures.

Here are the guidelines to help foster successful problem-solving:

1. No conflict between a parent, student-athlete, official, or coach should be addressed during or immediately following a game, competition, or practice. The game sites, practice field, lobby, or locker room are not appropriate places to handle conflict or disagreement. Emotions can run high during athletics, it is a requirement that ALL take time to reflect and think.
2. Coaches are NOT to meet or deal with conflict at these times or places. **Coaches have full authority to say “I am not able to speak with you at this time, please set up a meeting with the Athletic Director.”**
3. If a parent/guardian or family member is upset, they should call the Athletic Director, **the following day**, to discuss the situation or arrange a meeting with the coach and Athletic Director. **Playing time is not a topic that will be discussed.**
4. AF Providence High requires parents/guardians, family members, and guests to respect the decisions of the coaches and officials during contests and practices. Our school and athletic program understands that anyone may disagree with the decisions; however, in order to teach sportsmanship and fair play, we need ALL adults and guests to be **visible** role models.

The following procedure should be following for problem-solving:

1. As we are fostering independence in our student-athletes - if an issue arises, the **student-athlete** needs to set up a meeting to discuss with their coach. **This should be the first step with any conflict.**

2. If a further meeting is needed, the coach, student-athlete, and parent/guardian may request the meeting. This should be done through the Athletic Director for the Athletic Director will keep notes of the meeting.
3. If the conflict is not resolved after said meeting, the Athletic Director will inform the AF Providence High School Leadership Team and work together to make decisions moving forward.

Registering Student-Athletes

Student-athletes will complete registration on the [Athletics Registration Website](#).

[Here](#) are directions if you are registering for the first time or need help.

While registering - students and parents/guardians will be sent a ***PHS Athletics Handbook Agreement***. Students may be required to complete the **RIIL Assumption of Risk** form. Students will also need a **valid physical** on file.

Students **AND** parents/guardians must sign and return **all** of the aforementioned forms before the start of the sport's tryout dates.

***NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRYOUT UNLESS ALL DOCUMENTATION IS COMPLETED BEFORE THE START OF TRYOUTS.**

Tryouts

Depending on the sport, student-athletes may be subject to a mandatory **try out** for a sport. Students might not be selected to be a member of the team; as such AF Providence High School is not responsible or required to handle parent/guardian phone calls or complaints pertaining to tryouts, tryout process, or team selections. ***Cuts and team selections are non-negotiable and not a valid reason to contact AF Providence High School.**

For “cut-sports” coaches will use an evaluative selection process. Coaches have clear criteria and performance indicators that are requirements to be successful in the sport. Some sports may have Freshmen or JV teams, when appropriate, these levels are also subject to the tryout process.

Attendance at all tryouts for cut-sports is mandatory; student-athletes unable to attend any tryout sessions **MUST** notify the Head Coach and Athletic Administrator prior to their absence.

Pay to Play Policy

Achievement First Providence High School will institute a *pay to play* policy for the 2023-2024 school year for all student-athletes on all teams, for each season. This is a policy that will be reconsidered and re-evaluated on a yearly basis. The reason for the *pay to play* policy is because sports are not a requirement, but a privilege, and sports are expensive - especially when starting new programs.

The *pay to play* fees will be used differently in every sport as each sport has different requirements, needs, and expenses. Please be assured that the fee will be supporting your student-athlete in their designated sport.

Examples of expenses that pay to play fees cover: student-athlete rental of game/competition jerseys/uniforms, gym rentals, equipment rentals, transportation expenses, purchasing equipment, facility rentals for practices and games.

* Some sports will require student-athletes to purchase their own uniforms and/or warm-ups, and equipment as some items are size specific. *Please note, the pay to play fee will be **in addition** to personal expenses for uniforms, jerseys, and/or warm-ups where applicable.* *

** The pay to play fee is based on a “by season” basis, meaning every season your student-athlete is on a sports team, the *pay to play* policy will be in effect. There are Fall Sports, Winter Sports, and Spring Sports. *Example: If your student-athlete participates in a sport in all **3 seasons**, you are responsible for **3 separate pay to play fees.*** **

*** This fee is **non-refundable**, if a student-athlete is dismissed from the athletics program for any reason (academic failings, school behavior issues, team misconduct/not following team rules, or any other reason), student-athletes and families **WILL NOT** be refunded. ***

AF Providence High is pleased to announce that the *pay to play* fee for the 2023-2024 school year will be **\$60 per student-athlete per season**.

Student-athletes will not be allowed to attend any practices or games or receive any equipment/uniforms until payment is received.

Families will receive an invoice on the ParentSquare App, the outstanding balance will go on on the student-athlete's account.

Payments can be made:

(1) On the ParentSqaure App with a credit or debit card, (2) Cash or check, brought to the main office or Athletic Director. Checks should be made out to : AF Providence High School

Transportation Policy

Achievement First Providence High School **will NOT** provide transportation to any practices, games, competitions, etc. **UNLESS** deemed so by the Athletic Director. Students and families are responsible for transportation to and from all practices, games, competitions, etc. and students are responsible for ensuring they attend every team practice, game, and competition.

Accepting a roster-spot on a team means that you are committing to finding transportation to every practice, game, and competition as well as being present and on-time for every practice, game, and competition.

Students and families may need to utilize public transportation, ride sharing apps, carpooling, or altering schedules so that student-athletes are able to attend **ALL** mandatory practices, games, and competitions **ON TIME**.

Achievement First Providence High School **MAY** provide transportation for practices, games, competitions, or tournaments that are during the post-season or for a trip that is of lengthy travel time. This will be communicated to student-athletes and parents/guardians in advance.

***If student-athletes are repeatedly absent or late to practices, games, or competitions - that student-athlete is subject to dismissal from the team.**

Vacation Policy

Student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and contests during the season, including practices, games, and contests, during school vacations. If a student-athlete does need to miss a practice or contests, they **MUST** tell their coach prior to the absence.

If a student-athlete knows they are going to be away from the team during the season, they should inform the coach before the season begins. This allows the coaches to plan accordingly for the student-athletes' absence. **If a student-athlete does not tell a coach that they will be missing during a portion of the season, prior to the season beginning, the student-athlete is subject to dismissal from the team.**

If a student-athlete is going to miss a period of time with the team for a personal vacation or other plans (medical exemptions), our policy is that student-athlete will have to sit out one contest for each contest during their absence before being allowed to participate in contests. Ex. - miss 3 contests for family vacation = not eligible to participate in 3 contests after returning from vacation. The student-athlete will also need to complete as many practices as they missed before returning to competition. Ex. - miss 5 practices for family vacation = not eligible for contests until being present and participating in 5 practices.

It is imperative that student-athletes and families understand they are making a commitment to a team AND our athletics program is making a commitment to student-athletes and families. As such, student-athletes and families should not plan to be away from their team during the season. This negatively impacts a team and athletics program; issues around fairness, playing time, and team morale often arise in these occurrences.

Rhode Island Interscholastic League - Rules and Regulations

Article 7 - Limitation of Season

Section 6. NON-SCHOOL COMPETITION AND LOYALTY TO SCHOOL TEAM

A. Definition of school sports season - A school sports season shall be defined as the period beginning with the date of the school's first practice with any part of a sports squad and ending with the school's last contest, including district and state tournament contests, in that sport.

B. Definition of Organized Non-School Competition - organized non-school competition shall be defined as any game(s) which is sponsored by an individual or organization and for which any of the following have been prearranged: coach, official(s), scorer, or team membership.

C. A member of a school team is defined as a student-athlete who is listed on a freshman, junior varsity, or varsity Eligibility List who is regularly present for and/or actively participates in, all team practices and competitions.

1. Bonafide members of a school team are prevented from missing a practice or competition to compete with an "out-of-school" team.

2. If a conflict arises between the high school team practice/competition and ***an out-of-school practice/competition*** on the same day, the high school team practice/competition must be honored by the student-athlete. Priority/loyalty must be given at all times to the high school team practices and contests ***unless a waiver has been granted by the Principal and Athletic Director on a case-by-case basis.***

3. ***Student-athletes may be a member of and compete for "out-of-school" teams if the conditions set forth in #1, 2, and 3 above are met.***

4. Penalties:

a. Any student-athlete who is in violation shall be ineligible for the next two (2) consecutive RILL League contests in which the student-athlete is a participant. This penalty is effective from the date of his/her last participation in a high school sport and may carry over to the next sports season in which s/he participates.

b. Any student-athlete who is found to be in violation of the rule a second (2nd) time or subsequent time(s) shall be ineligible for participation for the rest of that sport season. ***A student-athlete found to be in violation of Article 7, Section 6c at the end of that sport season shall be ineligible for the first two (2) RILL League contests of the same sport in the following year. If the student-athlete has senior eligibility, s/he shall be ineligible for the first two (2) contests of the next sport in which s/he participates. In both instances, the student-athlete may be declared ineligible for participation in all interscholastic athletics for his/her school for the remainder of the school year.***

D. During the academic year:

1. The Student-athlete may participate:

a. on a non-school sponsored team/competition as outlined in C above

b. provided prospective members of a high school, club, freshman, junior varsity or varsity team do not comprise in excess of fifty (50%) percent of the active members on the non-school team or

athletes on the high school varsity eligibility list are not comprised of members of the non-school team in excess of fifty (50%) percent of the membership of the non-school team.

This does not include 8th grade students

2. The high school coach(s) may not coach:

a. prospective member(s) of a high school, club, freshman, junior varsity or varsity team during the off season of his/her sport.

EXCEPTION: Coaches may coach students during the off season who have exhausted their athletic eligibility in their particular sport.

Rhode Island Interscholastic League - Rules and Regulations

ARTICLE 3 ELIGIBILITY

Section 10. RECRUITMENT OF STUDENT-ATHLETES BY PRIVATE, PAROCHIAL AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

To maintain the educational standards and dignity of our academic and athletic program, all members of the RIIL must refrain from any practices such as recruitment, enticements, and inducements or other pressure which would encourage students substantially for athletic purposes to leave, enter, or not to enter schools within their normal district, as defined by the Rhode Island Department of Education, or schools in which they have enrolled or have indicated in writing the intent to enroll. In order to ensure that the above prohibitions of the RIIL are carried out, the Committee has adopted the following regulations: (Note: This also applies to students below grade 9 who are contemplating enrolling in a RIIL member school, public, private or parochial).

POLICY ON RECRUITING

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Recruiting is the use of undue influence and/or special inducement by anyone associated with a school in an attempt to encourage a prospective student to attend or remain at that school for the purpose of participating in interscholastic athletics.

2. Recruitment of students or attempted recruitment of students for athletic purposes, regardless of their residence, is a gross violation of the by-laws of the RIIL and is expressly forbidden.

3. Member schools are responsible for any violation committed by any person who is under the direct or indirect supervision and control of the principal. Member schools are also responsible for any violation committed by a person acting at the direction of any person under the direct supervision or control of the principal.

DUAL SPORT PARTICIPATION IN RIIL SPORTS

On June 15, 2015, the Principal's Committee on Athletics changed their rules concerning the ability of a student to participate in two sports within the same season (Fall, Winter, Spring).

AF Providence High School will allow a student to participate in two sports during the same season under the following conditions:

- The student must declare a primary and secondary sport prior to the season beginning.
- The Head Coach of the primary sport and Athletic Director have the final decision on any participation of the student with the secondary sport. For example, only the Head Coach of the primary sport and Athletic Director can give permission for a student to miss a practice or contest in order to participate with the secondary sport.
- A student must have permission from the Head Coach of the primary sport and Athletic Director in order to practice or compete for the secondary sport, even if there is no conflict with the primary sport.
- If a student tries out for a sport and doesn't make the team, they will not be allowed to try out for another team that has already made their selections, unless approved by Athletic Director and Head Coach.
- Students who wish to participate in two sports in the same season must declare their intentions with the Athletic Director.

Rhode Island General Laws

Title 11

Criminal Offenses

Chapter 11-21

Hazing

Section 11-21-1

§ 11-21-1 Penalty for hazing. – (a) Any organizer of, or participant in, an activity constituting hazing, as defined in subsection (b) of this section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500), or punished by imprisonment for not less than thirty (30) days nor more than one year, or both.

(b) "Hazing" as used in this chapter, means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. This conduct shall include, but not be limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student or any other person, or which subjects the student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

HAZING

Hazing, as it is defined in the Rhode Island General Laws (Chapter 11-21-1): ““Hazing” as used in this chapter, means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.” is not allowed and is punishable by dismissal from the athletic program and disciplinary action from the Leadership Team.

Examples of hazing:

During a pending investigation, the student-athlete(s) and/or coach(es) involved is subject to full investigation by the Providence High Leadership Team, Athletic Administrator, and the Providence and/or Rhode Island State Police Department when necessary. The student-athlete(s) and/or coach(es) involved may not be eligible to participate in team or school events for the conclusion of the investigation.

It is the responsibility of each coach and athlete to report any cases of hazing to the Athletic Administrator or the Principal.

This conduct shall include, but not be limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of the student or any other person, or which subjects the student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Title 16 - Education - Chapter 16-91

School and Youth Programs Concussions Act

Section 16-91-3

§ 16-91-3 School district's guidelines to be developed and implemented.

(a) The department of education and the department of health shall work in concert with the Rhode Island Interscholastic League to develop and promulgate guidelines to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury including continuing to play after concussion or head injury. A concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to the youth athlete's return to practice or competition.

(b) School districts are required to use training materials made available by the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention entitled "Heads Up: Concussion in the High School Sports/Concussion in Youth Sports" and any updates or amendments thereto, or training materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The department of education shall post training materials made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention on its website. All coaches and volunteers involved in a youth sport or activity covered by this chapter must complete a training course and a refresher course annually thereafter in concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Training may consist of videos, classes, and any other generally accepted mode and medium of providing information. School districts are encouraged to have school nurses complete a training course in concussions and traumatic brain injuries.

(c) School districts are encouraged to have all student athletes perform baseline neuropsychological testing, computerized or otherwise. Parents and/or guardians shall be provided with information as to the risk of concussion and/or traumatic brain injuries prior to the start of every sport season and they shall sign an acknowledgement as to their receipt of such information.

(d) A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.

(e) A youth athlete, who has been removed from play, may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed physician who may consult with an athletic trainer, all of whom shall be trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. The athlete must receive written clearance to return to play from that licensed physician.

(f) All school districts are encouraged to have an athletic trainer or similarly trained person at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute.

History of Section.(P.L. 2010, ch. 21, § 1; P.L. 2010, ch. 22, § 1; P.L. 2011, ch. 227, § 1; P.L. 2011, ch. 237, § 1.)

Concussions

National Federation of State High School Associations

- Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications that range from prolonged brain damage to death if not managed properly.
- An athlete who has a head injury should not return to play without evaluation by medical personnel.
- Do not allow any athlete to return to participation if he/she has any symptoms.
- If an apparent head injury occurs, even if uncertainty exists about the severity of the injury and whether a true concussion occurred, that athlete should not return to action until medical clearance is obtained.
- Even a seemingly mild head injury, often referred to as a “ding” or “bell ringer” is now considered a true concussion and must be managed as such to avoid potential long-term consequences.
- Neither loss of consciousness, vomiting or amnesia is necessary for a head injury to be considered a concussion.

Recognition

A concussion, by definition, means “to shake violently.” A blow to the head that causes the brain to shake inside the skull and result in EVEN A BRIEF AND MILD alteration in brain function is considered a concussion. Although no obvious signs or symptoms may show up immediately, listed below are some of the symptoms that may suggest a concussion has occurred. Any of these:

Headache	Forgets play responsibilities
Dazed and vacant expression (“foggy”)	Double vision or blurred vision
Confusion	Increased sensitivity to light or noise
Difficulty with balance and coordination skills	Sleep difficulties
Difficulty with concentration, memory, and organizational skills	Increased irritability
Nausea and/or vomiting	Hypersensitivity to light and noise
Amnesia	Abnormal vision, hearing, smell and/or taste
Slurred and/or inappropriate speech	Excessive fatigue
Repeating the same questions or comments	Abnormal sleep patterns
Numbness and tingling	Ringing in the ears

Significance

The initial recognition and management of concussions are particularly important in high school athletes in preventing two potential complications associated with concussions in this age group: post-concussion syndrome and second-impact syndrome. Younger athletes may be at increased risk of cerebral swelling after a mild head injury with greater vulnerability for post- concussion symptoms for a longer period of time. Proper management should minimize the risk for these catastrophic results.

Recognition of Concussions

Severity

The severity or seriousness of a concussion is primarily based on how long the symptoms last. The number and severity of symptoms may have some correlation, but no specific symptoms are more likely to help determine severity. Restricting mental and physical activity immediately after the concussion seems to correlate with a quicker return to play.

Signs and Symptoms of Concussions

Coaches, administrators, officials (See Table 10 below) parents and athletes need to be aware of the observable signs and reported symptoms of a concussion.

Table 10. Signs and Symptoms of Concussions

Signs observed by medical staff	Symptoms reported by athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player appears dazed • Player has vacant facial expression • Confusion about assignment • Athlete forgets plays • Disorientation to game, score, opposing team • Inappropriate emotional reaction (laughing, crying) • Player displays incoordination or clumsiness • Player is slow to answer questions • Loss of consciousness • Repeating the same questions or comments over and over again 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Nausea • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling slowed down • Feeling “foggy” or “not sharp” • Change in sleep pattern • Concentration or memory problems • Irritability • Sadness • Feeling more emotional

Cumulative Effects of Repeated Concussions

A three-year, follow-up study shows that athletes having a previous history of at least one concussion are at an increased risk for further concussions. As the number of concussions increase, so do the risk for future injuries (Guskiewicz et al, 2003). It has also been shown that repeated concussions have been linked to longer recovery periods. Highlighting the importance of making sure athletes are symptom free prior to returning to competition from a previous MHI, research has shown that 1 in 15 athletes with a concussion have recurring concussions within 7-10 days from the first concussion. Because of these findings and the potential for complications resulting from MHIs, it is recommended that athletes sustaining more than one concussion should be referred for follow-up evaluation and assessment to determine any residual effects that might preclude participation in contact or collision sports. Cases of individuals suffering permanent brain damage from multiple concussions have been reported but no consensus on how many concussions are too many or what leads to that permanent damage.

Medical Clearance to Return to Participation after Head Injury

There is unanimous agreement within the medical community that NO athlete who has signs and symptoms of post-concussion should be returned to action. There is also unanimity that there is increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after a preceding

concussion and from cumulative damage of multiple head injuries. The more concussions an individual has, the greater is the risk of having additional concussions. The exact period of increased vulnerability or the number of concussions that is “too many” has not been determined. Traditionally, physicians have advised athletes not to return to action until they have been free of symptoms for a minimum of a week. (McCrea et al, 2003). Now, rather than discuss a length of time to be free of symptoms, guidelines suggest using the gradual return-to-play protocol shown above while monitoring the athlete for symptoms. This could be longer or shorter than a week. Research, utilizing some of the testing instruments mentioned above, is now revealing subtle residual effects of concussion not found by traditional evaluation. These identifiable deficits frequently persist after the obvious signs of concussion are gone and appear to have relevance to whether an athlete can return to action with relative safety.

Source: National Federation of State High School Associations Sports
Medicine Handbook—Fourth Edition

Endorsed by the RI Interscholastic League Sports Medicine Advisory Comm.

Complications Associated with Concussions

Post-Concussion Syndrome

Following a concussion, athletes may suffer a number of lingering symptoms for varying lengths of time. Below are listed some of the more common symptoms that may last for weeks or months. Again, no athlete with any symptom related to head injury should even begin the return-to-play protocol.

- . Impaired attention
- . Concentration and memory deficits
- . Dizziness
- . Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- . Fatigue
- . Irritability
- . Visual problems
- . Neurasthenia, weakness or numbness
- . Prolonged or recurring headaches (especially with exertion)*

*Often high school athletes may return to sport prematurely because the headache can mistakenly be seen as a common ailment. However, recent research has shown that athletes with residual headaches even a week post concussion do poorly on specialized tests such as reaction time and memory (Collins et al, 2003). It is imperative that even a seemingly non- significant headache not be dismissed as a common ailment prior to return- ing to sports.

Second-Impact Syndrome

Second-impact syndrome is a rare event, which poses a significant concern for athletes who return too soon after suffering a previous concussion. Second-impact syndrome occurs when a second concussion occurs before a previous concussion has completely healed even if both of the injuries were very mild. Second-impact syndrome is characterized by an autoregulatory dysfunction that causes rapid and fatal brain swelling and can result in death in as little as two to five minutes (McCrory, 1998). It is particularly important to note that **virtually all of the second-impact syndrome cases that have been reported have occurred in adolescent athletes.** The signs of second-impact syndrome are as follows:

- Previous history of concussion
- Visual, motor or sensory changes
- Difficulty with memory and/or thought process
- Collapse into coma
- Neurological abnormalities in strength, range of motion or sensory feelings.

Returning the Athlete to Participation

The International Conference on Concussion at Vienna (2001) and Prague (2004) have significantly changed the thinking of proper management of head injuries in athletes. Some of the conclusions are high- lighted below:

- The grading systems for concussions previously utilized are no longer considered useful in determining how serious an injury may be or in determining when an athlete can safely return to play. No symptom(s) or signs (including loss of consciousness or amnesia) accurately predict the severity of the injury or help decide when an athlete can return to play.
- New guidelines recommend monitoring the course of the symptoms and beginning a gradual return-to-play protocol when all symptoms have cleared. (See Table 8—Sideline Decision-making and Table 9— Return-to-play below)

- There are now objective, validated methods of evaluating brain function in athletes to help physicians determine with greater confidence when an athlete does seem to be clear of symptoms and can start through the graduated return-to-play regimen. These include questionnaires, various pencil-and-paper tests, balance tests, neuro- logical and memory tasks, and computerized tests. Recognizing that athletes, with the mentality of “playing through the pain,” are not always totally candid about admitting symptoms, guidelines now recommend the use of these more objective methods to evaluate how an athlete’s brain is functioning. Tests requiring little cost like Sideline Assessment of Concussion (SAC), Sideline Concussion Checklist (SCC), and Sport Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT) have been shown to be helpful. Newer computerized neuro-psychological screening like impact, CRI and Sentinel have also been shown to be helpful for physicians making return-to-play decisions.
- Guidelines further suggest that athletes playing high-risk or collision sports or with a history of previous concussions, should have these tests administered prior to the season to serve as a baseline in case an injury does occur.
- Mental exertion appears to worsen and prolong concussion symptoms to the same degree as physical exertion. Therefore, the concept of “cognitive rest” should be adhered to in concussion management. This may involve a limited class schedule for several days following a concussion, or rescheduling tests. More severely con- cussed athletes may require more detailed and long-lasting special accommodations.
- A requirement to begin the return-to-play protocol is that the athlete must have no symptoms. Then, gradual increase in mental activity as tolerated will be followed by a similar gradual return to full physical activity. If symptoms recur, then the athlete must regress to a previous level of performance. (See Tables 8 and 9)

Table 8. Sideline Decision-making

Sideline Decision-making	Medical Clearance RTP Protocol
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) after head injury even if clear in 15 minutes without medical clearance. 2. Any athlete removed from play for a head injury must have appropriate medical clearance before practice or competition may resume. 3. Close observation of athlete should continue for a few hours. 4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based on return of any signs or symptoms. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic. 2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc. 3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as skating, running, etc. 4. Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, ground balls, batting, etc. 5. Then full contact in practice setting. 6. If athlete remains without symptoms, he or she may return to play.
<p>A. Athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level. B. If symptoms recur, athlete must return to previous level. C. Medical check should occur before contact.</p>	

Table 9. Return-to-Play

Return-to-play Medical Clearance Protocol
No mental or physical activity should occur until athlete's symptoms are gone. Avoid physical exertion but also avoid studying, school attendance, test taking, video games, computer use and TV until clear.
When clear, begin with short periods of reading, focusing and an abbreviated school day as tolerated.
When tolerating full day of school attendance, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc. Gradually increase intensity and duration as tolerated.
Advance to aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as skating, running, etc.
Advance to non-contact skill drills sports specific such as dribbling, batting, shooting.
Full contact in practice setting.
If accomplishes all the above without return of signs and symptoms, may return to play following final clearance. Some athletes, especially if multiple previous concussions, should consider having a base-line computerized neuropsychological test performed because of the increased risk of concussions in those with previous ones.