

# Welcome to Tri-County RVTHS Athletics

High School Athletics can be a wonderful and exciting educational experience. It is our goal that each student/athlete enjoys this life experience and takes with him/her the life skills to be a contributing member of society. This handbook contains information regarding policies, practices and regulations that govern the participation in Tri-County Athletics will assist you in answering many of your questions regarding interscholastic athletics at Tri-County.

## Philosophy:

The Interscholastic Athletic Program at Tri-County RVTHS is committed to the Mission Statement of the Tri-County RVTHS District, which states:

Through a rigorous, comprehensive program of vocational/technical and academic preparation, as well as a progressive system of individual support and guidance, we strive to maximize the potential of each student for successful transition to full time employment, to the pursuit of higher education, to a personal commitment of life-long learning and to the full participation as creative, responsible, productive American citizens.

The athletic program is an extension of this philosophy and will provide learning experiences, which contribute to physical, mental, social and emotional growth. Athletics should foster the development of self-esteem and a climate among coaches and student/athletes where mutual respect, honor and integrity are valued.

The interscholastic program is a voluntary program designed to meet the needs and interests of the student/athlete who has sufficient ability. We believe that all people learn best when they are actively engaged. The student/athlete must be prepared to make a major commitment to his/her maximum development of knowledge, skills and attitudes under the supervision of a thoroughly trained and effective coaching staff committed to the educational goals of the school district.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness in its educational programs, full range of any occupational/vocational education program, extra- curricular and school based activities or employment policies as required by Title IX of 1972 Education Amendments and Chapter 622 The Acts of 1971. Our policy is also in full compliance with the laws of The United States and Commonwealth of Massachusetts and all applicable regulations thereto with regard to special education and education of the handicapped [Chapter 766, PL94- 142 and section 504 of Rehabilitation Acts of 1973 and Chapter 74 Vocational Education in Massachusetts.]

## **Goals:**

In respect of individual student differences in abilities and interest, the athletic program is comprehensive. All students who show an interest in the program will be encouraged to participate. The emphasis at each level is:

***Varsity – VERY COMPETITIVE / INSTRUCTIONAL***

***Junior Varsity and Freshmen – COMPETITIVE / INSTRUCTIONAL***

At the varsity level the coach will use sound judgment in deciding who should participate in game situations. At the remaining levels the coaches will give every opportunity for each member of the team to participate, seeking to develop each athlete to his/her fullest potential and to provide opportunities for him/her to test those skills through interscholastic competition.

### **Athletic Department Goals:**

1. To foster, through teamwork, a positive attitude towards life
2. To encourage winning, but not winning at all cost
3. To encourage respect for the rights and abilities of others
4. To improve athletic skills and confidence
5. To encourage communication with the team and individual athletes
6. To develop character, team spirit, sportsmanship and a sense of fair play

***Our program is committed to both male and female athletics in funding, scheduling, equipment and support. No athlete will be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. Our program is an investment in the future of these fine student/athletes and one in which our school system is happy to share.***

## **Governing Bodies:**

### ***MIAA/MSSAA***

Tri-County RVTHS is a member in good standing with the MIAA and MSSAA. With membership, the Principal and Athletic Department agree to abide by all rules and regulations put forth by the MIAA and MSSAA.

### ***Mayflower Athletic Conference***

Tri-County RVTHS is a proud member of the Mayflower Athletic Conference. The conference is made up of the following school districts: Avon, Bristol-Plymouth RVTHS, Bristol Agricultural H.S., Blue Hills RVTHS, Bishop Connolly H.S., Diman RVTHS, Holbrook H.S., Nantucket H.S., Norfolk Agricultural H.S., Old Colony RVTHS, Sacred Heart H.S., Southeastern RVTHS, South

Shore RVTHS, Upper Cape RVTHS, West Bridgewater H.S. and Westport H.S. The conference is committed to the excellence of interscholastic educational athletics.

### ***Tri-County School Committee***

The Tri-County School Committee and Principal set additional policies, regulations and rules. Under MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set additional policies, rules, and regulations as long as they are not less restrictive than those stipulated by the MIAA.

## **Athletic Programs:**

Student participation in the athletic program is a privilege, which can be a valuable and rewarding experience. Students have the opportunity to participate during three seasons.

### **Fall**

*Cross Country*  
*Football*  
*Golf*  
*Volleyball*  
*Soccer*  
*Cheerleading*

### **Winter**

*Basketball*  
*Wrestling*  
*Cheerleading*  
*Ice Hockey*

### **Spring**

*Baseball*  
*Softball*  
*Track/Field*  
*Lacrosse*

## **Duration of Season**

### **Fall**

Practice may begin for all teams as early as the second Thursday proceeding Labor Day (i.e. August 24, 2017). No team may have more than ten single practice sessions through and including the Friday prior to Labor Day. Football teams must precede their initial contact practice with an additional three days of single non-contact sessions. Season ends around Nov. 1st except Football which ends on the Wednesday proceeding Thanksgiving.

### **Winter**

Practice will begin on the Monday following Thanksgiving and will end late in February. MIAA tournament will follow.

### **Spring**

Practice will begin on the third Monday in March to the completion of the schedule (Memorial Day weekend) and any MIAA tournament games.

## **To the Parents**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to your child. As parents, when your child becomes involved in the athletic program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child in each program and level of play. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

### ***Communication you should expect from the coach:***

1. Philosophy of the coach

2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all players on the team
3. Location and times of practices and games
4. Team requirements; i.e. practices, special equipment, conditioning
5. Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

***Communication coaches expect from parents:***

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any scheduled conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns with regards to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your child becomes involved in the program at Tri-County, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child may wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

***Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:***

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve athletic skills
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches take their profession seriously. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all student/athletes involved.

***Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:***

1. Playing time at the varsity level
2. Team strategies
3. Play calling
4. Other student/athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These meetings are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed.

1. Call the Athletic Department (508-528-5400 ext. 184) to set up an appointment
2. If the coach cannot be reached, speak to the Athletic Director. Either a returned call or meeting from the coach will be arranged.
3. **DO NOT CALL THE COACH AT HOME:** (Unless the coach has made his/her home phone available to parents and athletes) A coach's time with the family is severely limited during the season and the family privacy should be respected.
4. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONFRONT A COACH BEFORE OR AFTER A CONTEST OR PRACTICE:** These can be emotional times for both parent and coach. Meetings under these circumstances do not promote any resolution.

## **If the meeting did not provide a satisfactory resolution**

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director
2. The Athletic Director will listen carefully to your concerns and mediate a resolution between you and the coach.

**Remember:** Your concerns are important to us. Never hesitate to follow the above procedure to make your concerns known. Together we can work to only improve the athletic program.

### **Commitment:**

When trying out for a team and after being selected to be a member of a team, Tri-County athletes are expected to attend all practices and games of that team. Practices will average two hours in duration. Weekend practice sessions vary from sport to sport. Teams frequently practice or play games during school vacation weeks. ***Interscholastic athletics demands much more of a commitment than youth sports or recreational activities. Students and parents should be aware of the time commitment prior one's trying out for a team.***

### **School/Family Vacations/ Extended Absences:**

Every team member is expected to be present for all team practices and games. Because of scheduling parameters, many of our teams practice and/or play during scheduled vacations. A student/athlete who plans to be absent for an extended period of time due to a vacation or a planned extended absence, should discuss this situation with the coach prior to trying out for the team. The coach's discretion will be used in determining the consequences for such extended absences.

### **MIAA Bona Fide Team Member Rule:**

A Bona Fide team member of the school is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team sessions (practices and competitions). Bona Fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity/event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. **First Offense:** Student athlete is suspended for 25% of the season. **Second Offense:** Student athlete is suspended for an additional 25% of the season, and is ineligible for tournament play immediately upon confirmation of the violation.

### **Tryouts:**

Participation in high school athletics is a privilege given to those students who meet all the requirements set forth by the MIAA and Tri-County School Committee. Student's tryout voluntarily and, for some teams, risks being cut. During the tryout period, the coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can meet these expectations. After tryouts begin, no athlete may leave one team for another (voluntarily or due to dismissal by the coach) without the consent of both coaches involved and the Athletic Director.

### **Daily Team Attendance:**

It is extremely important that a coach be notified by the student/athlete if he/she is not going to be present at practice or a game. Practice is where plans for upcoming contests are devised and

perfected. The coaches in our program expect their athletes to be present at all team-related activities. Suspension or dismissal may take place as a result of such absences.

### **School Attendance/Tardiness for participation:**

Tri-County student/athletes are reminded at the beginning of each season of the requirements for good school and team citizenship:

1. Come to school each day and be on time for school and classes.
2. Attend all classes, do your homework and behave in a mature manner.
3. The abuse of any of these citizenship requirements could result in the suspension or dismissal from an athletic team.

Unless approved by the Principal, students who incur an unexcused absence on the day of a practice or game will not be allowed to participate in any athletic events that day; also if a student incurs an unexcused absence on a Friday they may not participate in any athletic practices or games during that weekend. (Holidays that follow a weekend are considered part of the weekend). Athletes must be in school prior to 9:16 a.m. in order to practice or compete in a game unless excused by the Principal. **Excused absences are listed in the Student Handbook.** An accumulation of 4 or more unexcused absences at the end of each marking period may prevent a student from participating in athletics, until the end of the next marking period.

### **Medical Exams / Parental Permission Forms/Concussion Certification**

All students who plan to participate in athletics must have written proof of a current physical examination signed by a physician. In order for the examination to be considered current, it must be dated within thirteen months of any athletic involvement. Parent permission forms, which contain important emergency and insurance information, must also be completed and signed by both the athlete and parent prior to participation. Concussion Certification can be accessed through the NFHSlearn.com website.

### **Tri-County RVTHS – Student Handbook:**

The Student Handbook and any other school rules supersede the Athletic Handbook.

### **Academic Eligibility:**

**Academic Performance:** Students opting to participate in athletics should keep in mind that academic achievement should be their main priority. Frequently, the most successful athletes are those who perform well academically in the classroom and are instrumental in promoting a positive learning environment at Tri-County.

**Eligibility Rules:** In order to participate in athletics at Tri-County the following eligibility rules apply:

1. Must be enrolled as a full-time student at Tri-County

2. May not fail more than 5 credits during a term. Student/athletes who fail more than 5 credits in a term will become ineligible to participate the following term. Student/athletes who fail more than 5 credits for the year are ineligible 1<sup>st</sup> term of the following school year. **Summer School Credits can be applied for 1<sup>st</sup> term eligibility.**
3. Academic and attendance eligibility of all students is to be considered effective on the date that report cards are mailed.

### **Time Allowed for Participation – Age Limit**

A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive athletic seasons beyond the eighth grade. A student must be less than 19 years of age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of that current school year.

### **MIAA CHEMICAL HEALTH POLICY:**

During the school year, beginning with the first day of school sponsored activities and ending on the last day of the school year, a student/athlete shall not, regardless of quantity, use, consume, possess, buy, sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana, steroids, or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”. It is not a violation for a student/athlete to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her physician. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements.

First violation: When the principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at interscholastic practices.

Second and Subsequent Violations: When the principal has determined, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a second violation has occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport.

If, after the second or subsequent violation, the student of his/her own volition becomes a successful participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, and has demonstrated both positive behavior and academic effort in school since the violation, the principal may reinstate the student after an ineligibility consisting of the season or quarter when the violation occurred.

### **Team Rules and Regulations:**

At the start of each season a coach, with the approval of the Athletic Director, may issue a set of team rules and regulations to his/her team. It is recommended that these be in written form and distributed to the athletes and their parents at a preseason meeting.

Unexcused absences or inappropriate behavior will be subject to the following:

1. Warning

2. Suspension from competition for one week. Athletes will be required to attend all practices and team meetings during this week.
3. Dismissal from the team for the remainder of the current season.

### **Care of Equipment:**

Student-athletes have an obligation and responsibility for all equipment issued to them. Each athlete is responsible for the proper care and retention of the equipment from the date of issue to the date of return. Equipment should be stored in a locked locker at all times. Experience has shown us that most losses are due to lockers left open, unlocked, or equipment left unattended. If a student loses school equipment or fails to return the same, he/she is responsible to meet the current replacement cost of said equipment. Payment is required prior to the next season of play or graduation. No student will be allowed to try out for another sport until all outstanding equipment has been returned or reimbursed. If an athlete leaves the team for any reason, it is his/her responsibility to return all school equipment immediately.

### **Transportation:**

Tri-County provides bus transportation to all “away” contests. All team members are expected to travel to their contests using the school-provided transportation. Exceptions to this rule must be requested to the Athletic Director or Principal by the student athlete’s parent/guardian prior to the contest. A coach may give permission for a student athlete to ride home from a game site with his/her parents/guardian only.

### **Team Apparel:**

The athletic department will provide the necessary equipment and uniforms, within budgetary limits, for each team member. Mouthguards are highly recommended for all athletes, and are available in the athletic office. Some teams choose to purchase additional team apparel such as hats, T-shirts, jackets, or warm-ups in order to promote team spirit. The Athletic Director must approve all such orders, including logos and slogans.

### **Directions to Away Contests:**

Directions to away contests can be found on the high school web site:  
[www.tri-county.us/athletics](http://www.tri-county.us/athletics)

### **Building and Facility Access:**

A school staff member will not allow any student access to any of the athletic facilities without proper supervision. Students may not use the gymnasium or weight room unless there is a staff member present.

**Locker Room:** Student athletes are expected to respect the locker room facilities, showers, and general areas of the athletic wing. We expect our students to take pride in the facilities by disposing of trash in the proper receptacles and keeping the locker room clean and in good condition.

### **Team Captains:**

It is a coaching decision as to how team captains are selected. They may be elected by the team or appointed by the coach prior to the first regularly scheduled contest. Captains may also be elected or appointed on a game-to-game basis. It is expected that team captains be leaders of their team and should be ready to assume duties outlined by their coach. Captains are expected to communicate with the coach and team in the event of any problems that may affect the team or its members. Captains may be asked to meet with the Athletic Director during the school year to discuss the athletic program and athletic policies. Captains of teams may be relieved of their duties as captain by the coach, in consultation with the Athletic Director, for violating a team or school rules. **Captains will automatically be relieved of their captainship for violating the MIAA/School Chemical Health Policy and will not be allowed to captain any other sport that interscholastic year.**

### **School Discipline Obligations:**

Student/Athletes at Tri-County are representing themselves, their families, team, school and community at all times. Therefore, athletes will be held accountable for their actions on and off the field of play. A student/athlete with a school disciplinary obligation must fulfill that obligation before reporting to a practice or a game. Student/athletes cannot expect, and should not request, disciplinary action to be postponed or cancelled for any athletic reason. The Athletic Director reserves the right to remove a student/athlete from a team for excessive disciplinary problems. The student/athlete may be reinstated upon sufficient evidence of improvement. All coaches are to use their discretion, but should remain within the following guidelines in handling problems involving their athletes. There should be a cooperative effort between the coach, athletic director, and school administration if the situation deems it necessary. When disciplinary action must be taken, the priority will be to act in the best interest of the athlete(s) involved, while maintaining the integrity of the athletic program's philosophy and objectives.

### **Hazing:**

**Any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization or team, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person, is not allowed. Such conduct is a crime under Massachusetts Law and will not be tolerated. (For further information refer to Mass. State Law chapter 536, Sect. 16-19)**

## **Playing Time:**

Perhaps the most emotional part of a student/athlete being involved in high school athletics centers around playing time. The student becomes involved in interscholastic athletics for the first time and finds that practices and expectations are much more intense and demanding. Factors such as practice attendance, attitude, commitment, and of course, athletic skills enter the decision for a coach regarding playing time.

At the varsity level, we look for our teams to compete against opponents at the highest possible level of execution. This is the highest level of interscholastic competition, and players, coaches, parents and community members want Tri-County to be successful. Tri-County should attempt to win as many games as possible. In order to accomplish this, there may be instances when the most competitive, skilled team members will carry the major burden of the contest. However, teams cannot be successful without the commitment of all players. The coaches will do everything possible to give these athletes playing time that includes quality minutes.

Success is never measured in wins and losses, but in the performance level of each of the athletes that compete in the game. If our athletes perform to the best of their abilities, they will always be successful no matter what the final score might be.

## **Sportsmanship:**

Tri-County expects the highest level of sportsmanship to be displayed at all times. Coaches, players, parents, and spectators are to treat opponents, game officials, and visiting spectators with the highest respect. They are guests at our facility and are to be treated like guests.

**The Mayflower Athletic Conference and the MIAA have a “no tolerance” policy for any spectator or player that is deemed to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship; this violation may result in dismissal from a contest. Tri-County, then reserves the right to impose additional discipline to both spectators and players for behavior that was deemed inappropriate sportsmanship at both home and away contests.**

## **College Guidance:**

One of the most important decisions facing high school student/athletes is what to do with their lives after high school. The members of the Tri-County Athletic Staff are willing and eager to assist all of their students/athlete with this extremely important decision. The staff members fully understand the importance of their assistance to you. They may be able to answer questions, contact schools and or coaches, send videos, and write letters of recommendation.

In the event a college recruiter should contact an athlete personally, he/she should work through his/her coach and athletic department. Inform the coach or athletic director immediately of such contact.

## **Awards:**

Students who participate in athletics may qualify for a variety of awards such as certificates, plaques and lettered jackets. The criteria for such awards are as follows:

**Certificates:** Awarded to athletes who complete a full sport season in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Athletes must attend or compete in practices, season schedule and post season tournaments in which that team has qualified.
2. Athletes must be academically eligible.
3. Injured athletes will have their cases reviewed by the coaching staff and athletic director to determine eligibility.
4. Athletes dismissed from a team due to attendance or disciplinary reasons will not receive credit for that season.

**Plaques:** Given by coaches to athletes who distinguish themselves among their peers during the course of a season. (Examples of such awards: MVP, Most Improved and Most Dedicated: Up to **3** for each varsity team and **2** for each sub-varsity team.)

**Lettered Jackets:** Awarded to athletes who earn **40 points** or **successful completion** of four years in one sport.

1. Any and all freshmen participation 6 points per season
2. Junior Varsity participation 6 points
3. Team Managers 6 points
4. Varsity participation 10 points