



GAHANNA LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL

# **STUDENT-ATHLETE / FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR**



[www.GahannaLincolnAthletics.com](http://www.GahannaLincolnAthletics.com)

**GAHANNA-JEFFERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**GAHANNA LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

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**Website:** [www.gahannaschools.org](http://www.gahannaschools.org)

**Gahanna Lincoln High School**

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## Welcome to Gahanna Lincoln Athletics

*Letter from your Director of Athletics*

Dear Lion Student-Athletes and Families,

Welcome to a new year of Gahanna Lincoln High School Athletics! Whether you're returning for another season or just beginning your journey, we're excited to have you as part of the Lion family.

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, we believe athletics are an extension of the classroom, shaping habits, character, and lifelong values. We believe in education-based athletics, where every student-athlete grows through competition, teamwork, and perseverance. Our programs build champions in life, not just on the scoreboard.

As student-athletes, you are leaders and ambassadors of our school and community. We expect you to compete with integrity, show respect, and support one another. Families, we ask that you lead by example, modeling the sportsmanship and positive spirit that we value.

Together, we live by One PRIDE: Purpose, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence. These values guide everything we do, helping us grow stronger as a team and as a community.

Let's make this a great year—together.

With Lion PRIDE,

Matthew Welsh, CMAA  
Director of Athletics

## Gahanna Lincoln High School Athletic Department Philosophy

The athletic programs of Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools and Gahanna Lincoln High School are a collaborative effort among the Board of Education, the Administration, and the athletic department. Participating in various interscholastic athletics is a vital part of a student's educational experience. The experiences contribute to the development of learning skills and emotional patterns that enable students to maximize the benefits of their education.

Participation in GLHS interscholastic athletics is a privilege that comes with a responsibility to the school, the activity, the student body, the community, and the individual student. By promoting sportsmanship at all levels, we believe the program instills pride, reinforces a sound value structure, and enhances the individual's self-image and the image of the school district and the community.

Gahanna Lincoln High School's student activities are considered an integral part of the educational program, providing experiences that will help develop student-athletes physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

The Gahanna Lincoln High School Athletic Department is committed to providing all students a positive and enriching athletic experience. Interscholastic athletics, when conducted within the framework of the OHSAA and guided by our core values, play a vital role in the educational development of our young people.

### District Values in GLHS Athletics:

- **Integrity:** We uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play, both on and off the area of competition.
- **Students First:** We prioritize the academic, social, and emotional well-being of our student-athletes, recognizing that athletic participation is an extension of their overall educational experience.
- **Collaboration:** We foster strong relationships and partnerships among coaches, athletes, families, and the broader school community to create a supportive and inclusive environment.
- **Empowerment:** We empower our student-athletes to develop leadership skills, self-discipline, and a strong work ethic, equipping them to serve their communities throughout their lives.
- **Inclusivity:** We strive to create an athletic program that is welcoming and accessible to all students, regardless of their skill level, background, or ability.
- **Excellence:** We encourage excellence in all aspects of our athletic programs, emphasizing the importance of hard work, dedication, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

## Lions Athletic Mission:

The Gahanna Lincoln High School Athletic Department's Mission is intended to complement the Gahanna-Jefferson Public School's Mission and is dedicated to:

- ***Developing well-rounded individuals:*** We strive to cultivate strong character, sportsmanship, leadership, and life skills through participation in athletics.
- ***Promoting academic success:*** We emphasize the importance of academic achievement and support student-athletes in balancing their athletic commitments with their studies.
- ***Fostering a positive and inclusive environment:*** We create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere in which all student-athletes feel valued and respected.
- ***Building school spirit and community:*** Our athletic programs foster a sense of pride and unity within our school and community.

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*By adhering to these principles, our athletic program will contribute to the success of our student-athletes on the field or court and prepare them for lifelong success in all aspects of their lives.*

## 2025-26 Varsity Athletic Programs

### FALL

Cheerleading (Fall) - Coed

Cross Country - Boys

Cross Country - Girls

Football - Coed

Golf - Boys

Golf - Girls

Soccer - Boys

Soccer - Girls

Tennis - Girls

Volleyball - Girls

### WINTER

Basketball - Boys

Basketball - Girls

Bowling - Boys

Bowling - Girls

Cheerleading (Winter) - Coed

Ice Hockey - Coed

Swimming & Diving - Coed

Wrestling - Boys

Wrestling - Girls

### SPRING

Baseball - Coed

Lacrosse - Boys

Lacrosse - Girls

Softball - Girls

Tennis - Boys

Track & Field - Boys

Track & Field - Girls

Volleyball - Boys

## **General Information**

### **Ohio High School Athletic Association**

Gahanna Lincoln High School is a proud member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). All coaches, families, and athletes must be familiar with the [OHSAA bylaws](#). Intentionally violating any bylaws or other policies is a serious offense. All members of the GLHS athletics community are expected to comply with OHSAA rules and regulations.

For more information, please visit the Ohio High School Athletic Association website at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org).

### **Ohio Capital Conference**

Gahanna Lincoln High School is a member of the Ohio Capital Conference (OCC), a highly prestigious and competitive conference consisting of public high schools in the central Ohio area. Teams compete at the state level annually in nearly every sport.

Gahanna Lincoln coaches are required to attend all relevant conference meetings, including all-conference selection meetings for their respective sports, seasonal conference meetings, and coach meetings.

More details about the Ohio Capital Conference can be found at [www.OhioCapitalConference.org](http://www.OhioCapitalConference.org)

### **Athletic Schedules**

The most up-to-date athletic schedules can be viewed at [www.GahannaLincolnAthletics.com](http://www.GahannaLincolnAthletics.com). Athletic schedules are subject to change. Updates will be provided by the coaching staff and/or athletic department. The appropriate conference or league creates and provides conference or league schedules to the athletic department. Non-conference or league games are scheduled by the head coach and/or the athletic department.

## Requirements for Student-Athlete Participation

To be eligible to participate in any athletic program at Gahanna Lincoln High School, student-athletes and families must complete the following steps in FinalForms:

1. **Valid OHSAA Pre-Participation Physical Exam** (must remain current through the entire sport season) - *uploaded to FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*
2. **Emergency Medical Authorization Form** - *uploaded to FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*
3. **OHSAA Authorization and Consent Form** - *completed in FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*
4. **OHSAA Eligibility and Authorization Statement** - *completed in FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*
5. **OHSAA Concussion Information Sheet** - *completed in FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*
6. **Meet academic eligibility requirements** - *the grading period immediately preceding the start of the athletic season*
  - a. Passing five (5) core credits or equivalent (OHSAA)
  - b. Achieving a minimum of a 2.0 GPA or greater (GJPS)
7. Attend a mandatory preseason meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s) and coaching staff - *as scheduled seasonally by the athletic department*
8. FinalForms must be completed by the student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) - *completed in FinalForms before enrolling and trying out in the sport*

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*Prepared athletes are successful athletes.*

*Complete your forms, meet your responsibilities, and represent GLHS with pride.*

# **Gahanna Lincoln High School**

## **Athletic Department Code of Conduct**

*(for Student-Athletes, Families, and Spectators)*

### **Purpose**

The Gahanna Lincoln High School Athletic Department is committed to providing a positive, enriching, and inclusive athletic experience that promotes academic excellence, character development, and personal growth for all student-athletes. Our programs are extensions of the district's educational mission, grounded in our core values of putting students first, integrity, collaboration, empowerment, inclusivity, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

All student-athletes, families, and spectators are expected to uphold these core values and contribute to a culture of respect, leadership, and school pride.

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*As Lions, we hold ourselves to the highest standards and lead by example in all that we do.*

## Student-Athlete Expectations

### Standards for Athlete Behavior

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, student-athletes are expected to uphold the highest standards of behavior in all athletic-related settings, both in competition and outside of it. As leaders in our school and community, your conduct reflects not only on yourself but on your teammates, coaches, and the entire Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools community.

Maintaining a respectful, safe, and positive environment is essential. Therefore, the following standards must be followed:

#### Conflict with Spectators

- Student-athletes must remain within the designated playing area during contests.
- At no time may a student-athlete enter the spectator area to engage verbally or physically with a spectator, opponent, or fan.
- If a student-athlete leaves the playing area and enters the stands to engage in a conflict:
  - The student-athlete's privilege to participate in interscholastic athletics will be revoked, and the student-athlete will be ineligible for the rest of the school year.

Respect for others and self-control must always be maintained – even in emotionally challenging circumstances.

#### Inappropriate Participant Behavior

Student-athletes are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviors:

- Taunting or disrespecting officials, opponents, or spectators
- Leaving the bench area during an altercation
- Use of profanity during games, practices, or any school-related athletic activity
- Damage to or destruction of school property (either at Gahanna Lincoln or other schools)
- Theft of school or personal property during any athletic event, practice, or related activity

Violations of these behavioral expectations may result in school-based discipline, athletic suspensions, or further penalties as directed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA).

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*At Gahanna Lincoln, success is measured not only by our performance in competition, but also by the character we demonstrate beyond it.*

## Sportsmanship Philosophy and Guidelines

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, our student-athletes are leaders both in competition and in the community. As representatives of our school and community, all players must consistently demonstrate respect, integrity, and sportsmanship at all times. Our student-athletes are expected to:

- Be students first and focus on high achievement in the classroom.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship toward teammates by encouraging and cooperating with them, and by showing respect to coaches through listening, following instructions, and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Respect opponents as fellow competitors and guests, treating them with dignity during and after competition.
- Engage in positive sportsmanship by shaking hands with your opponents and offering sincere well wishes before and after contests, when appropriate.
- Demonstrate self-control by respectfully accepting officials' decisions without argument, gestures, or visible displays of disagreement.
- Win or lose with pride, grace, and humility, recognizing that success is measured by effort, attitude, and respect just as much as the final score.
- Embrace the responsibility of representing Gahanna Lincoln High School and the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools with pride, both in athletic competition and throughout the community.

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*As a Lion, your actions reflect on yourself, your team, your school, and your community. We expect all athletes to compete with character and lead by example.*

# Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

## Expectations

*Student-athletes must:*

- Maintain academic eligibility in accordance with district and Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSA) standards.
- Demonstrate respectful and responsible behavior at school, athletic events, and within the community.
- Use social media responsibly and represent your team, school, and district in a manner that reflects positively on them.
- Respect teammates, coaches, officials, opponents, and all community members.
- Commit to health and wellness by abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances, and unsafe behaviors.
- Follow team expectations regarding dress, attendance, and conduct.

## Unacceptable Behaviors for Student-Athletes

### 1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Disrespect toward opponents, officials, coaches, teammates, or fans.
- Taunting, trash-talking, or any gestures meant to demean others.
- Arguing with or disrespecting officials.

### 2. Hazing, Bullying, or Harassment

- Any initiation, hazing, or harassment of teammates or others.
- Cyberbullying through social media, text, or any digital platform.
- Threatening or intimidating others verbally, physically, or electronically.

### 3. Substance Abuse

- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, or illegal drugs.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during school or athletic events.

### 4. Academic Dishonesty

- Cheating, plagiarism, or any form of dishonesty in the classroom.

### 5. Violations of School Policies

- Violations of any code of conduct or student handbook rules established by the school.

- Skipping class, unexcused absences, or repeated tardiness.

#### 6. Criminal Behavior

- Engaging in theft, vandalism, or destruction of property.
- Physical assault, fighting, or any form of violence.
- Possession of weapons or dangerous objects.

#### 7. Disrespect for Diversity and Inclusion

- Use of racial, ethnic, or gender-based slurs or any discriminatory language.
- Intolerance or harassment based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

#### 8. Poor Representation of the School

- Wearing the uniform or representing the school while engaging in inappropriate conduct.
- Behavior that embarrasses the team, school, or community.

#### 9. Failure to Follow Team Rules and Expectations

- Missing practices, games, or team meetings without a valid excuse.
- Not adhering to the team's dress code, curfew, or other program-specific guidelines.

### Consequences for Violations

- Corrective discussions and interventions by coaches or administrators.
- Temporary suspension from athletic participation.
- Ruled ineligible and unable to participate.
- Disciplinary action consistent with the GJPS Student Handbook.
- Permanent removal from athletic programs for serious or repeated misconduct.

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*Sportsmanship is not just a requirement — it's a reflection of who we are.*

## Social Media & Digital Citizenship

Student-athletes are viewed as leaders and representatives of Gahanna Lincoln High School, both on and off the competition area, including in digital spaces.

While social media can be a great way to share achievements and team spirit, it also creates public reflections of character. Content posted online is easily accessible by coaches, colleges, media, employers, and others.

*Student-athletes must refrain from posting content that includes:*

- Images, videos, or language showing or implying the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs
- Sexually explicit content or links to inappropriate material
- Profanity, hate speech, threats, or disrespectful remarks
- Derogatory or disrespectful comments toward teammates, opponents, coaches, or officials.
- Content that misrepresents Gahanna Lincoln High School, the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools, or its athletic programs

*Violations may result in:*

- Written warning
- Meeting with the coach and/or athletic director
- Suspension or removal from the team, depending on the severity of the offense

*Recommendations for student-athletes:*

- Use strong privacy settings
- Avoid posting personal contact information
- Think before you post — if you wouldn't say it publicly at school or to a coach, don't post it online.

If you're unsure whether something is appropriate, ask: Does this reflect my values and represent my school in a positive light?

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*At Gahanna Lincoln, athletes are expected to lead with class, both online and in the community.*

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

The use, possession, or distribution of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited — on or off school grounds, during or outside the season. This policy is enforced year-round and applies cumulatively from grades 7 through 12.

Violations may be verified by:

- Observation by school staff, coaches, or administrators
- Law enforcement reports
- Verified social media or digital content

### **Consequences for violations**

First Offense:

- Minimum 7-day suspension from team participation
- Enrollment in a substance abuse education or intervention program (e.g., counseling or “Passages” equivalent)
- For alcohol/drug offenses: Professional assessment must be completed, and follow-up counseling, if recommended

Second Offense:

- Minimum 14-day suspension from participation
- Required enrollment in a formal intervention program
- Minimum of 10 hours of community service (must be approved in advance by the Athletic Director)
- Tobacco-specific offenses: Enrollment in a smoking cessation program

Third Offense:

- Suspension from all GJPS athletics for up to one calendar year
- Final decision made by the Athletic Disciplinary Council (Athletic Director, Building Administrator, and designated staff member)

### **Self-Referral Policy**

Student-athletes (or their parent/guardian) may voluntarily disclose a substance abuse concern before any disciplinary investigation:

- Student-athletes must complete a professional assessment and follow all treatment recommendations
- Student-athletes may continue to participate as long as they remain compliant with the treatment plan
- A self-referral will be documented as a first offense in the event of future violations

## Participation Limits & Transfers

- Students are eligible for eight consecutive semesters (grades 9–12) and may not participate in the same sport for more than four seasons.
  - A student is ineligible after turning 20 years old.
  - Transfer students must complete all OHSAA eligibility documentation and receive clearance before participating.
  - Ineligible students are not permitted to wear the team uniform or participate in scrimmages or competitions.
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## Additional Disciplinary Action

Any violation of the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, whether on school grounds, during school-related events, in the community, or online, may result in school discipline and athletic consequences. The administration and athletic department reserve the right to evaluate each situation and apply appropriate consequences, including suspension or removal from a team.

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*At Gahanna Lincoln, athletes are expected to lead with class, both online and in the community.*

*Being a Lion means holding yourself to a higher standard,  
in the classroom, in competition, and in life.*

## Player Ejection from a Contest

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) has established strict regulations regarding player conduct during competition. Gahanna Lincoln High School fully supports and enforces these rules to promote the highest standards of sportsmanship.

*If a student-athlete is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct or a flagrant foul:*

- The student-athlete is ineligible for the remainder of that day's contest(s).
- Additionally, the student-athlete must miss the next two regular-season or tournament contests in the same sport at the same level of play (or one contest if the ejection occurs in football).
- If the ejection occurs during the final contest of the season, the suspension carries over to the next sports season in which the student-athlete participates.

*While under suspension:*

- The student-athlete may remain a team member and can travel with the team, enter the locker room, sit on the team bench, and participate in team activities at the contest site. During this time, they must wear Gahanna Lincoln apparel (street clothes) and be under the supervision of a member of the coaching staff.

*If a student-athlete is ejected a second time during the same season:*

- The student-athlete in that sport will be suspended for the remainder of that season.
- If the second ejection occurs during the final contest of the season, the suspension may carry over into the next sport, with the specific length and terms determined by the OHSAA.

After the OHSAA-defined suspension has been completed, the return to play is at the discretion of the head coach, the athletic department, and the building principal.

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*All GLHS, student-athletes must know, understand, and comply with the OHSAA ejection regulations. Failure to do so may result in additional disciplinary action at the school or district level.*



Respect<sup>SM</sup>  
THE  
GAME

## Families and Fans Code of Conduct

### Respect the Game

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, interscholastic athletics are an extension of the educational process, teaching student-athletes essential life lessons in perseverance, teamwork, responsibility, and respect. Families and fans play a crucial role in shaping the athletic experience and modeling the behaviors we expect from our students.

A student's success or lack thereof in sports does not define their family. However, raising a student-athlete who is coachable, respectful, resilient, a great teammate, mentally tough, and committed to doing their best directly reflects strong parental support and guidance.

To help create the best environment for all students, families, and fans are asked to embrace the following:

- **Remember Why They Play:** Student-athletes participate for their growth, enjoyment, and love of the game, not to entertain a crowd.
- **Support the Coaches:** Get to know your student-athlete's coaches. We trust that the leadership, philosophy, and ethics of our coaching staff align with the values of our school and athletic department.
- **Respect Our Coaches:** Coaches dedicate their time and energy to developing student-athletes. Support their efforts, even if you don't always agree with every decision they make.
- **Focus on Growth:** Recognize that athletics are an integral part of the learning experience. Praise your student-athlete's effort and improvement, just as you would encourage growth in the classroom, whether in victory or defeat.
- **Attend with Purpose:** Attend contests to support and cheer for our teams. Avoid behavior that may intimidate opponents, other fans, or officials. Athletics should unite, not divide.
- **Respect the Opportunity:** Remember, a ticket to an athletic event is a privilege to observe and support the contest, not a license to be disruptive, confrontational, or abusive.
- **Appreciate Our Opponents:** Competition wouldn't exist without them. Respect them as fellow participants working hard toward the same goals.
- **Treat Others with Dignity:** Respect opposing players, coaches, fans, and support groups. Treat visitors as you would treat guests in your own home.

- **Promote Positive Behavior:** Cheer for our team, not against our opponent. Refrain from taunting, booing, or derogatory remarks toward opponents, officials, or other spectators.
- **Appreciate the Game:** Learn the game's basic rules to better understand the flow of play, decisions, and officiating.
- **Respect Officials:** Recognize the integrity and professionalism of game officials and understand that they are doing their best to facilitate fair and competitive contests.
- **Model Leadership:** Through your words, actions, and reactions, be a positive role model for all in attendance. If inappropriate behavior occurs nearby, address it appropriately or report it to event staff.
- **Celebrate Effort, Not Just Outcomes:** Recognize that doing one's best, improving, and learning from mistakes are as valuable as winning. Never ridicule or criticize a student-athlete for errors or performance.
- **Support Integrity and Fair Play:** Encourage student-athletes to play by the rules and resolve conflicts respectfully, without resorting to hostility or confrontation.
- **Honor the Officials:** Officials are crucial to ensuring fair competition. Their judgment should be respected, even when there are disagreements.
- **Use Positive Language:** Refrain from profanity, yelling at officials, or harassing players, coaches, or other fans.
- **Lead by Example:** Students look to the adults in their lives for guidance. Let your actions reflect the pride, respect, and responsibility we value at Gahanna Lincoln.

At Gahanna Lincoln, we take pride in our tradition of excellence in athletic performance, sportsmanship, leadership, and community spirit. Thank you for doing your part to "Respect the Game" and supporting our student-athletes in a positive and meaningful way.

Together, we can build an environment where every athlete, coach, official, and fan feels respected and where the true spirit of interscholastic athletics is preserved.

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*Lion Pride means respecting the game, respecting others, and representing Gahanna with class.*

## Spectator Expectations

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, spectators play a vital role in creating a positive and respectful atmosphere at athletic events. Your support of our student-athletes, coaches, officials, and opponents reflects the values of our school and community. All spectators are expected to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship at all times, both before, during, and after every contest.

All families, family members, and spectators attending athletic events must:

- Demonstrate positive sportsmanship at all times.
- Support all participants, coaches, and officials with respect and enthusiasm.
- Promote a cooperative and positive environment in collaboration with coaches, administrators, and students.
- Refrain from coaching from the stands during games or practices.
- Honor officials' and coaches' decisions without confrontation.
- Treat all contests, home and away, with the same high standards of respect expected on GJPS property.

### Unacceptable Behaviors

- Taunting, ridiculing, or verbally abusing officials, players, coaches, or other spectators.
- Using profanity, derogatory language, chants, signs, or cheers.
- Interfering with coaching responsibilities from the stands or sidelines.
- Entering the team box, locker rooms, or restricted areas during contests.
- Confronting another parent, coach, or official before, during, or after events.
- Criticizing school officials publicly at contests or events.
- Engaging in disruptive behavior that interrupts or delays a contest.

Being a spectator at extracurricular events is a privilege. Spectators should be advised that the athletic director and building/district administration reserve the right to restrict a spectator's attendance at events if unacceptable behavior is displayed.

## Enforcement and Consequences for Spectators

- *First Offense:*
  - The Athletic Director will set up a meeting with the spectator.
  - Possible suspension from the following two (2) home contests in the same sport.
  - Formal notification letter from the Athletic Department.
- *Second Offense:*
  - Suspension from all home athletic contests for the remainder of the season in which the infraction occurred.
  - Formal notification letter from school administration.
- *Third Offense:*
  - Suspension from all GJPS athletic contests, events, and school activities for the remainder of the school year.
  - Formal notification letter from the Superintendent or designee.

*Note: Any contest official, game supervisor, athletic administrator, principal, or other designated school administrator may enforce spectator removal or ejection.*

## Community and Attendee Sportsmanship Expectations

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, we believe athletics are an important part of a student's educational experience. Through competition, we have the opportunity to teach and demonstrate respect, integrity, responsibility, and teamwork – the proper foundation for sportsmanship.

As members of the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), Gahanna Lincoln High School and Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools are committed to promoting sportsmanship at all levels – from our athletes and coaches to families, fans, and spectators. Every community member plays a role in creating a positive and respectful environment.

We expect all Lions to embrace the following sportsmanship principles:

- Respect Others: Treat athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, and fellow spectators with dignity at home and away contests.
- Honor the Game: Follow the rules, support fair play, and respect officials' decisions.
- Stay Composed: Maintain self-control and represent our school with pride, regardless of the outcome.
- Appreciate Excellence: Recognize outstanding effort and performance from all participants on both teams.
- Protect the Environment: Take care of school facilities, equipment, and shared spaces, whether at your school or when visiting another school.

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*At GLHS, we compete hard, fairly, and always show Lion Pride.*

## Academic Eligibility Policy

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, academic success is the foundation of athletic eligibility. As a student-athlete, your first responsibility is in the classroom.

Student-athletes must meet both the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education policy ([2431](#)) and the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) standards to be eligible for athletic participation.

Gahanna-Jefferson Requirements:

- All student-athletes must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA each grading period preceding the grading period in which the student-athlete wishes to participate.

OHSAA Requirements:

- Student-athletes must pass a minimum of five (5) one-credit courses or the equivalent during the preceding grading period. These must be core academic courses that count toward graduation.

Additional Clarifications:

- All coursework must be submitted by the final day of the grading period. Late work submitted after the grading period ends does not count toward eligibility.
- Grades are final once posted. Teachers cannot retroactively update grades for eligibility purposes.
- If a student receives an incomplete due to excused absence, they are immediately ineligible until the incomplete is resolved with a passing grade.
  - Once the grade is updated, the student-athlete must contact the athletic director to begin the OHSAA reinstatement process.
  - Reinstatement is not automatic. It is based on:
    - The reason for the incomplete grade.
    - Documentation of excused absences.
    - An attendance record that reflects the expectations of a committed student-athlete.

Failure to meet these academic standards will result in ineligibility for practices, games, and team events. There are no exceptions.

*Academic accountability prepares our student-athletes for life beyond high school. Strive for excellence in the classroom, and success on the field or court will follow.*

## Attendance Policy for Participation

Being a student-athlete at Gahanna Lincoln High School begins with being a student first. Daily school attendance is essential to academic success, athletic eligibility, and team accountability.

In accordance with the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education policy ([2431](#)), a student-athlete must be present for at least half of the school day to participate in practices, games, or competitions on that day. This includes both home and away events.

- Excused absences (such as medical appointments, funerals, or other verified reasons) do not count against participation eligibility.
- Unexcused absences or absences without proper documentation may result in a loss of participation for that day.

It is the student-athlete's responsibility to ensure that any absence is accurately recorded and properly documented with the school attendance office. If an absence is reported in error, the student-athlete must work directly with the school attendance office to resolve it promptly.

All absence documentation (doctor's notes, parent notes for excused reasons, etc.) should be submitted to the attendance office upon return to school. Timely communication and follow-through are expected.

Student-athletes who regularly miss school or fail to meet attendance expectations may face consequences, up to and including suspension from team activities. Consistent school attendance reflects commitment, discipline, and respect — all qualities we value in Lion Athletics.

## Playing Time Philosophy

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, participation in interscholastic athletics is both a privilege and a commitment. Playing time is earned, not guaranteed, and is determined solely at the discretion of the coaching staff. Coaches make these decisions based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to:

- Effort and performance during practices and games
- Attitude, teamwork, and coachability
- Preparation and focus during the preseason and in-season training
- Conduct in the classroom, in the locker room, and throughout the school community
- Overall commitment to the team and program standards

Our coaches are educators, and their role includes making decisions that serve the team's best interests while helping student-athletes grow. Student-athletes are encouraged to take ownership of their development. If questions arise about playing time, student-athletes must respectfully initiate a conversation with their coach to seek feedback and guidance. This is an important life skill and an opportunity for personal growth.

Conversations about playing time are a valuable opportunity for student-athletes to advocate for themselves, take ownership of their development, and build communication skills. We encourage and expect student-athletes to initiate these discussions directly with their coaches.

If further conversation is necessary, any meeting involving families and coaches about playing time must include the student-athlete. Discussions of this nature will not be conducted solely between families and coaches or athletic department staff. We ask that families support this boundary as part of our shared effort to foster responsibility, resilience, and respect in our student-athletes.

We are proud of the opportunities we provide through education-based athletics, and we remain committed to helping every student-athlete reach their full potential both on and off the area of competition.

## Communications

### Communication with Your Student-Athlete

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, open, supportive communication between families and student-athletes is essential to a positive and meaningful athletic experience. The way you engage with your student-athlete throughout their sports journey plays a vital role in their development, confidence, and enjoyment of athletics.

Families are encouraged to keep the following principles in mind:

- **Be Objective:** Maintain a realistic perspective about your student-athlete's abilities, sportsmanship, attitude, and development. Focus on growth, effort, and progress rather than just outcomes.
- **Offer Unconditional Support:** Ensure your student-athlete knows your love and pride are not tied to their performance. Whether they win or lose, succeed or struggle, your encouragement should always be steady.
- **Promote a Healthy Mindset:** Encourage your student-athlete to enjoy competition, strive for improvement, embrace challenges, and find joy in the experience. Help them strike a balance between competitiveness, fun, growth, and good sportsmanship.
- **Avoid Coaching from the Stands:** Trust the coaches to lead and instruct the team. Offering technical advice during or after contests can overwhelm or confuse your student-athlete.
- **Support the Coaching Staff:** Reinforce the coach's role and authority. Conflicting guidance from families and coaches can create unnecessary stress and tension for student-athletes.
- **Focus on Their Journey — Not Yours:** Let your student-athlete experience their own successes and setbacks. Avoid projecting your past experiences or expectations onto their path.
- **Celebrate Individuality:** Avoid comparing your student-athlete to teammates, classmates, or siblings. Every athlete develops at their own pace and in their own way.

Through positive, patient, and encouraging communication, you help build the confidence and character your student-athlete needs to thrive on and off the field.

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*Your words matter. Choose encouragement, trust the process, and celebrate the journey.*

## Communication & Conflict Resolution Guidelines

Clear and respectful communication between families, student-athletes, coaches, and the athletic department is essential for maintaining a positive and productive environment in interscholastic athletics. Gahanna Lincoln High School is committed to supporting student-athletes and families through a transparent and structured communication process.

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### ***What Families Can Expect from Coaches***

Coaches are responsible for setting a clear vision for the program and ensuring your student-athlete has the tools to grow, compete, and succeed. You can expect the coach to communicate:

- Their coaching philosophy and expectations for the team.
  - Team rules and expectations for player conduct and commitment.
  - Practice and competition schedules, including locations and times.
  - Required equipment and recommended off-season activities or conditioning.
  - Procedures for reporting injuries or illnesses.
  - Consequences for rule violations or behavior concerns that could impact participation.
- 

### ***What Coaches Expect from Families***

To best support your student-athlete, coaches ask that families:

- Share any relevant health concerns or injury history that may affect participation.
  - Communicate special circumstances that could influence your student-athlete's performance or availability.
  - Provide advance notice of scheduling conflicts whenever possible.
  - Ask questions respectfully—especially when discussing team expectations or your student-athlete's experience.
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## Procedures for Discussing Concerns with Coaches

We encourage respectful and open communication when concerns arise, but always through the appropriate process.

1. **Schedule an Appointment:** Contact the coach to arrange a meeting. Meetings will not be held immediately before or after contests or during practices. Please use the coach's school-provided email to initiate communication.
2. **Meeting Format:** Meetings typically include the parent/guardian, student-athlete, and head coach, with an assistant coach also present. This format ensures a respectful, collaborative conversation.
3. **Topics of Discussion:**
  - Focus solely on your student-athlete's experience.
  - Discussions about other players or team decisions involving other athletes are not appropriate.
  - Coaches will provide honest, constructive feedback, including strengths, areas for improvement, and the student-athlete's role on the team.
4. **Next Steps:** If a satisfactory resolution is not reached after the coach's meeting, a follow-up meeting with the athletic director may be requested, provided that the initial steps have been taken.

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## Appropriate vs. Inappropriate Topics to Discuss with Coaches

### *Appropriate Topics:*

- Your student-athlete's experience, development, or well-being.
- Ways to support your student-athlete's improvement.
- Concerns about behavior, safety, or academic performance.

### *Inappropriate Topics:*

- Playing time or position.
- Game strategy, play calling, or coaching decisions.
- Other student-athletes' roles, performance, or behavior.

**Important Reminder:** Confronting a coach immediately after a game or practice is not productive and is strongly discouraged. Emotions tend to run high during these moments. We ask that families and coaches observe a 24-hour reflection period before initiating communication regarding concerns.

## Financial Obligations and Use of Equipment

Participating in interscholastic athletics at Gahanna Lincoln High School may involve financial responsibilities, including uniforms, equipment, and other team-related expenses. Families and student-athletes are expected to understand and uphold these responsibilities to support the integrity of our programs.

### Pay-to-Participate Fees

- Per the Gahanna-Jefferson Board of Education policy ([2431](#)), pay-to-participate fees are required for each sports season and are charged through the Infinite Campus portal.
- Fee Structure:
  - First Sport/Season - \$200
  - Second Sport/Season - \$100
  - Third Sport/Season - no fee
- All pay-to-participate fees must be paid in full before the first regular season competition.
- Students who qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program may have fees waived by submitting the [Consent to Share form](#), which is available on the district website.
- Failure to pay participation fees may result in delayed eligibility for participation.

### Uniforms and Team Apparel

- In some sports, student-athletes may be required to purchase a portion of their uniform (e.g., personalized jerseys, practice gear). These items become the property of the student-athlete.
- Uniforms and apparel issued by the school must be returned in good condition, with normal wear and tear accepted, following the conclusion of each season.

### School-Issued Equipment

Student-athletes are responsible for the proper care, use, and return of all equipment issued to them. The following expectations apply:

- Authorized Use Only: Equipment issued to a student-athlete will be used only during official practices, games, or team-approved events. Any other use requires coach approval.
- Uniform Modifications: No additions, alterations, or accessories may be added to issued uniforms without the coach's approval.
- Care and Maintenance: All equipment should be kept clean, in good condition, and properly stored. Athletes should secure their belongings using a personal lock on their assigned athletic locker. GLHS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items due to negligence.

- **Property of the School:** All equipment remains the property of Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools and may not be used for non-school events or by outside organizations without prior written approval from the Athletic Director.
- **Return and Replacement:** All equipment must be returned within one week of the season's final contest. Equipment not returned or damaged beyond normal wear and tear must be paid for at full replacement cost.
- **Participation Holds:** Student-athletes with outstanding equipment or financial obligations may be required to delay their participation in future seasons until these matters are resolved.

### **Additional Expenses**

In some programs, there may be additional team expenses beyond the standard participation fee (e.g., team gear, spirit wear, travel meals, banquets, etc.). Coaches will communicate these in advance, and we remain committed to working with families to address any financial concerns in a confidential manner.

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*Responsibility and accountability are part of being a Lion.  
Take pride in how you care for your gear, your space, and your program.*

## Additional Participation Guidelines

### Junior Varsity and Freshman Team Participation

The primary purpose of junior varsity and freshman teams is to provide student-athletes with meaningful opportunities to develop their skills, gain experience, and prepare for the demands of varsity competition. These teams focus on individual growth, learning, and building strong, consistent practice habits.

In sports where rosters are determined through tryouts:

- Seniors are not eligible to participate on junior varsity or freshman teams.
  - The coaching staff makes all placement decisions based on an athlete's ability, readiness, and the team's needs.
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### Transportation to Away Events

Gahanna Lincoln student-athletes are expected to use school-provided transportation to and from all away contests, scrimmages, and practices when available.

If a parent or guardian needs to transport their student-athlete due to extenuating circumstances:

- If extenuating circumstances require alternative transportation, a written request must be submitted to the head coach in advance. [Student-Athlete Travel Release form](#).
  - If approved, the student-athlete may only ride with their own parent or guardian.
  - Alternate transportation arrangements must not interfere with team expectations, arrival times, or group responsibilities.
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### Bench, Team Areas, and Locker Room Access

To maintain a safe and focused team environment, access to the bench, team areas, and locker rooms is strictly limited to:

- Official team members listed on the OHSAA eligibility form
- Coaching staff and approved volunteer assistants
- Certified athletic trainers, team physicians, and medical personnel
- Team managers, videographers, and staff approved by the head coach or athletic director

Spectators, family members, and students who are not team members must always remain in designated seating or spectator areas. These measures support the integrity of team operations and the safety of all participants.

## Conflicts Between Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, we encourage students to explore a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities, including athletics, fine arts, clubs, and academic competitions. Involvement in multiple programs fosters well-rounded student growth, leadership, and school pride.

However, with increased involvement comes the possibility of scheduling conflicts. While the athletic department and other activity sponsors work collaboratively to minimize these overlaps, it is the student's responsibility to manage their schedule and communicate effectively and proactively.

### Expectations:

- **Be Selective and Committed:** Before joining multiple teams, clubs, or programs, students should carefully assess their ability to meet each team's time, energy, and performance expectations. Overcommitment can lead to avoidable stress and diminished success in all areas.
- **Communicate Early and Often:** If a conflict arises between two school-sponsored activities, the student should notify the coach and the activity advisor as soon as possible. Timely and honest communication facilitates better collaboration and the exploration of potential solutions.
- **Fairness to the Team and Group:** Participation in extra-curricular activities is a shared responsibility. Regular absences or recurring conflicts not only affect the student but also impact the collective progress and cohesion of the group. Students should prioritize involvement in programs where they can consistently attend required practices, rehearsals, events, and competitions.
- **Collaborative Resolution:** Coaches and advisors will make reasonable efforts to support students navigating occasional conflicts. However, suppose a student's dual participation consistently disrupts one or both programs. In such cases, a decision may be made to prioritize one activity over another to ensure fairness to teammates and group members.

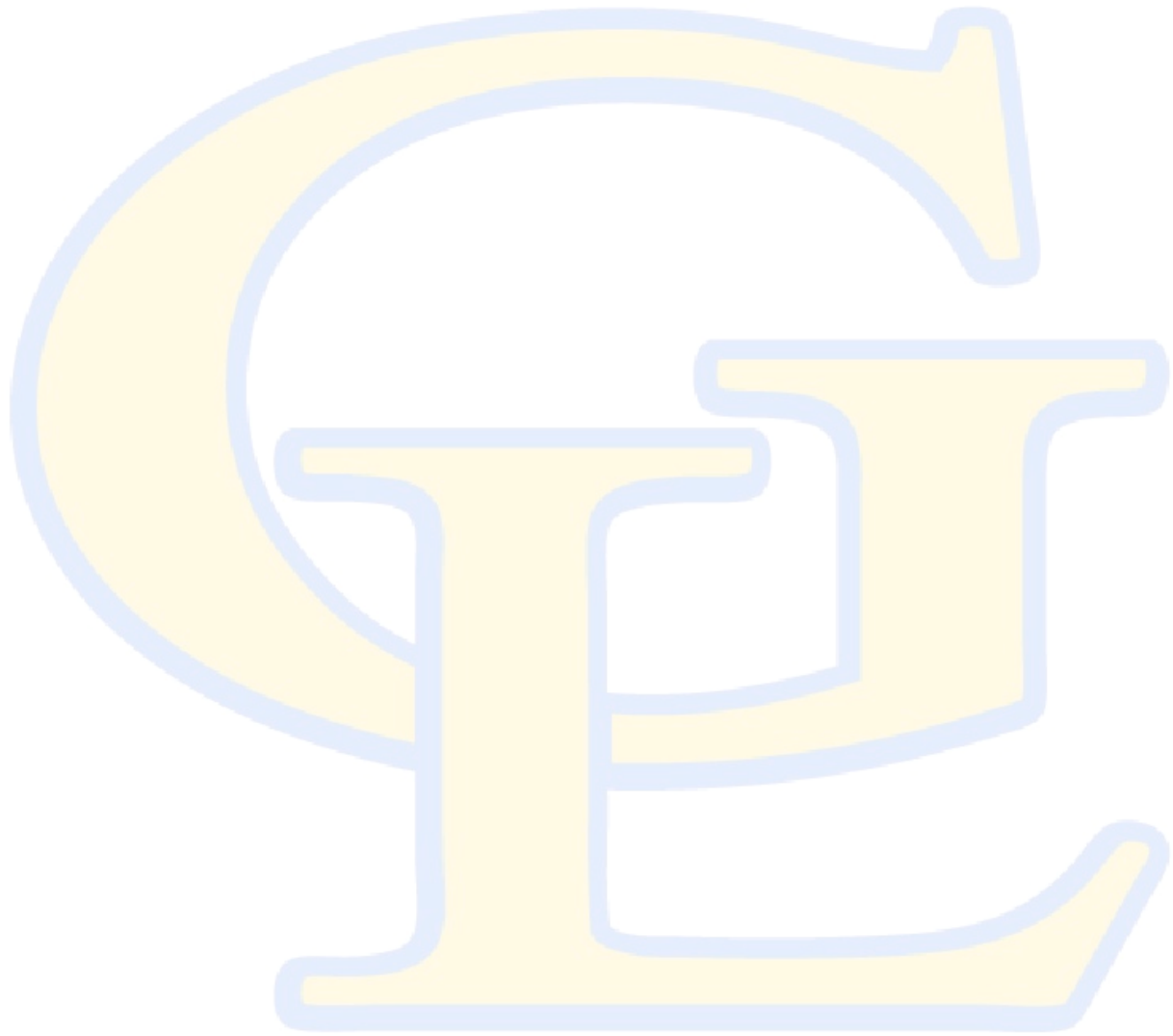
### Guiding Principles:

- Our students benefit when they can participate in a variety of activities.
- Teachers and coaches should make every reasonable effort to avoid conflicts. This should include avoiding multiple significant events on the same day, making scheduling requests to contest and tournament organizers, asking for scheduling adjustments so students can travel between two events, and allowing students to leave early or arrive late when possible.
- Students should not be penalized when two school activities conflict.
- Students have responsibilities to their ensembles and teams.
- Band, Choir, and Orchestra are graded academic courses, and the performances are a culminating part of the coursework.

- Performance and athletic events have different levels of importance, and higher importance should take priority
- When two competing events are deemed to have equal importance, the decision of which to attend shall be made by the coaches and teachers involved to avoid putting the student in an uncomfortable situation.

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*Balance, communication, and commitment are key to managing multiple opportunities successfully.*



## Student-Athletes Transferring Between Sports

At Gahanna Lincoln High School, we emphasize commitment, accountability, and follow-through as foundational values in all athletic programs. To uphold team integrity and respect the work of student-athletes and coaches, the following guidelines govern the process of transferring between sports:

*The following guidelines apply to student-athletes wishing to transfer from one sport to another:*

- Once a student-athlete has participated in the first scheduled scrimmage or contest, they may not transfer to another sport during that same season.
- A student-athlete who withdraws from a sport after the start of the season is not permitted to participate in any other sport, including open gyms, conditioning, or off-season activities, until the conclusion of the current sport's season.
- Exception:  
A student-athlete may participate in another sport's off-season activities (such as open gyms or conditioning) only with prior approval from the head coach of the sport they are withdrawing from. This ensures mutual understanding and maintains respect for all programs involved.
- Before Making a Change  
Any student-athlete considering withdrawing from a sport is strongly encouraged to:
  - First, speak directly with their head coach.
  - If necessary, schedule a conversation with the Athletic Director to understand the full impact of their decision and explore available options.

These policies are designed to foster a culture of responsibility, enhance team unity, and recognize the time and effort of all individuals involved. We expect all Lions to uphold their commitments and make positive contributions to their teams throughout each season.

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*At GLHS, we believe in finishing what we start. Commitment builds character.*