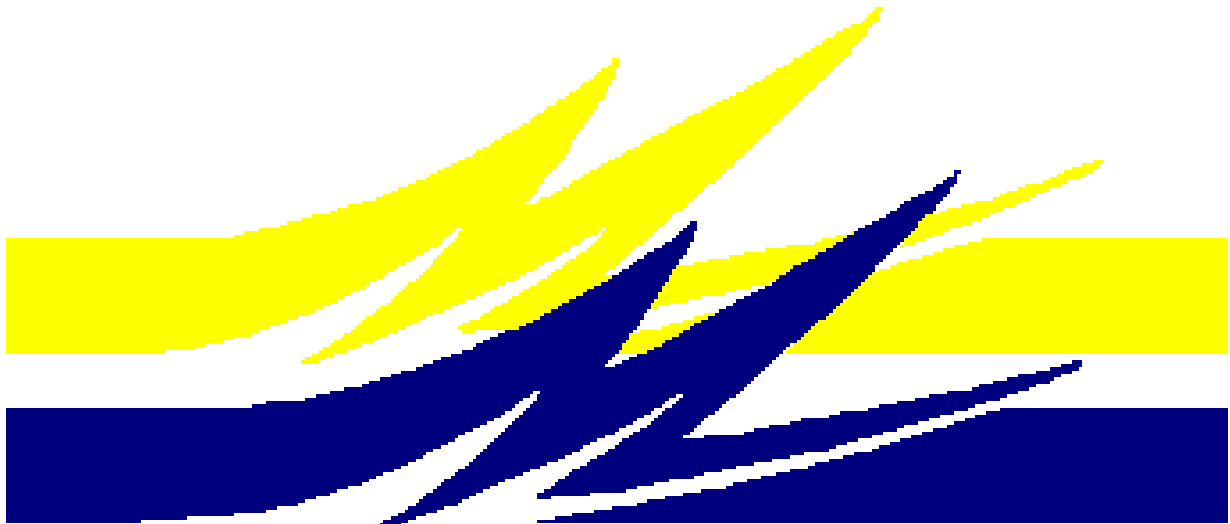


# **OCONTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK**

**2023-2024 School Year**



**Home of the Blue Devils**

***“LEADERS & LEARNERS – TODAY & TOMORROW”***

Revised April 2022

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## INTRODUCTION STATEMENT

This handbook is meant to serve as a guide to all middle school students. It is sincerely hoped that participation in co-curricular activities will be a very positive part of our middle school program. The Oconto Unified School District does not discriminate against persons in any curricular, co-curricular, pupil services, recreational, or any other programs or activity on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

## PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students involved in co-curricular activities should exert a positive leadership force on all of the students in school. They are expected to set positive examples of conduct and attitude for others to follow.

A Code of Conduct for students is important and necessary. Skill and team development achieved during practices, games, and meets can be offset by the irresponsible behavior of the student during the unsupervised time of his/her competition.

The Board of Education and the school are concerned with the healthy, social, and physical growth of its students. To achieve these goals, the following objectives have been established:

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- To increase active participation and offer the opportunity to participate with others
- To build self-confidence
- To develop self-reliance and self-discipline
- To provide the student with experience in commitment, dedication, and team loyalty
- To teach new skills, knowledge, and attitudes and develop those skills the student already has
- To stress good health and safety practices
- To increase appreciation and enjoyment for students
- To educate the community on the educational and social values of sports
- To instill the value of co-curricular activities for leisure-time activities
- To promote friendship, both with Oconto peers and opponents
- To provide opportunities to exemplify and observe good sportsmanship
- To remember that instilling the “will to win” is more important than “win at any cost”
- To develop leadership and acceptance of the leadership of others
- To seek excellence in competition
- To give students an understanding that participation in co-curricular activities is a privilege, not a right, and carries with it certain responsibilities.

## NO-CUT POLICY

In keeping with the philosophy of the middle school, all students will have the opportunity to participate in all co-curricular activities. The students will not have to try out for any team sport. As long as all team guidelines are followed, any student may be a part of the team. **The coach will decide on all issues regarding playing time.**

Students involved in any of the categories of participation are expected to adhere to the academic and behavioral standards mentioned in the handbook.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

It is the philosophy of the school that co-curricular activities are a very important part of the overall school program. We do not desire, however, to have students participating in co-curricular activities while their academics suffer. It is for that reason we have adopted a student eligibility policy, as follows:

- I. Any student failing a class is ineligible to participate in contests until the F is a passing grade. The participant must attend all practices and team activities until they regain eligibility. Ineligibility will be determined when a staff member contacts the principal to make a determination on the participant's eligibility. The middle school principal will make the eligibility determination and then notify the player, coaches, and parents if the participant is ineligible to compete in a contest.
- II. Other conditions may arise, as determined by the principal, Athletic/Activity Director, or coaches, that will render a student ineligible for activities for an extended period of time.
- III. A student must gain academic eligibility prior to serving a penalty for an athletic handbook violation.

## **HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR**

### **PHYSICAL EXAMS**

A student may not practice or participate in category I activities until the school has written evidence on file in the office attesting to the following:

- I. Parental permission each school year, and
- II. Current physical fitness to participate in sports, as determined by a licensed physician, no less than every other school year, with April 1 the earliest date of examination. [Note: It is recommended that students also have dental exams given by a licensed dentist]. A physical examination taken on April 1 and thereafter is valid for the following two years; physical examinations taken before April 1 are valid only for the remainder of that school year and the following school year.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND INFECTION CONTROL**

When MRSA infection is suspected, students or athletes should be referred to their primary care provider for evaluation and treatment. Following the medical evaluation, the student or parent should be asked to provide verification of the healthcare provider's treatment plan. (Those infected with MRSA should follow their healthcare provider's treatment plan, including completing antibiotic therapy if an antibiotic was prescribed.)

If MRSA is diagnosed, the student will be interviewed (with a parent/guardian present for young children) to investigate the possibility of other cases among friends, teammates, and/or family members. Other risk factors will be evaluated as appropriate.

### **INFECTION CONTROL**

When a student with a suspected or confirmed MRSA skin infection is in the classroom, the following infection control measures (based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]) should include, but may not be limited to:

**I. Keeping the wound covered.**

All skin infections, particularly those that produce pus, must be covered with a clean, dry bandage to contain the drainage. Because bandages can shift or dislodge with activity or when wet, students that participate in contact sports or other contact activities should ensure that the wound dressing stays intact during the anticipated activity. If a wound cannot be adequately covered or the drainage cannot be adequately contained by the bandage, the coach and or teacher should consider excluding the player from practice or competition until the lesion is healed. When providing wound care or dressing changes in the school setting, the staff must follow contact precautions. Contaminated dressings and other materials associated with the infected lesion should be placed in a plastic bag before discarding, as appropriate.

**II. Practicing good basic hygiene.**

The infected student, school staff, sports team staff, and anyone expected to have contact with the infected student must be diligent with hand hygiene. To this end, they should ensure the availability of adequate soap and hot water. They also should advise the MRSA-infected student and all those who might have contact with the infected wound or wound dressing to thoroughly wash their hands using soap and warm water or, if this is not practical, to use an alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizer. It is important to emphasize the importance of good hygiene overall, including showering and washing with soap after all practices and competitions, before and after using the gymnasium, weight room, wrestling mats, or any equipment.

**III. Encouraging students to avoid sharing personal items.**

Staff should instruct students and athletes to avoid sharing personal hygiene supplies and other items such as athletic clothing, towels, uniforms, skin balms, skin lubricants, razors, and certain sports equipment at all times. It is particularly important to avoid sharing personal items that may have been in contact with the infected wound or bandage. Also, students should not share soap in the shower or at the sink for handwashing but use soap dispensers instead. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used when soap and water are not available.

## **CONCUSSIONS**

**I. Oconto coaches should follow these guidelines when an athlete is suspected of having a concussion:**

- A. When in Doubt, Sit Them Out.** This is the slogan of the WIAA as it relates to concussions.
- B.** No athlete should return to play or practice on the same day as a concussion.
- C.** Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate healthcare professional that day.
- D.** Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
- E.** After medical clearance, return to play should follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delayed return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms.
- F.** Coaches are encouraged to complete the Concussion in Sports course, which is offered

by the WIAA for no fee. The WIAA has further information on concussions on its website: [www.wiaawi.org](http://www.wiaawi.org). It's encouraged that Oconto coaches utilize this resource to learn additional information on concussions.

- G. It is now required that all athletes, parents/guardians, and coaches receive information on concussion symptoms and appropriate treatment. These groups must sign a form verifying receiving this information.

## CODE OF CONDUCT PHILOSOPHY, RULES, AND PENALTIES

### I. CODE OF CONDUCT PHILOSOPHY

- A. Co-curricular participants should exert a positive leadership force on all of the students in school. They are expected to set positive examples of conduct and attitude for others to follow.
- B. Code of Conduct rules for students is important and necessary. Skill and team development achieved during practices and games can be offset by the irresponsible behavior of the student during the unsupervised time of his/her competition.
- C. The Board of Education and the school are concerned with the social and physical growth of its students. In order for these goals to be achieved, definite rules shall be a concern of each participant during the unsupervised time of his/her competition.

### II. CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

- A. All students involved in co-curricular activities are prohibited from the use and/or possession of any tobacco product, electronic cigarettes, alcohol, and controlled drugs during the entire calendar year (including summer months). **Warning, if a student does make a decision to hold or possess for another, it does provide justification for the penalty.**
- B. All students involved in co-curricular activities are prohibited from attending any function or facility where alcohol or drugs are openly being used, with the exception of:
  - 1. Being accompanied by one or both parents or legal guardians.
  - 2. Being at a wedding or parent-chaperoned graduation party to which the student is invited.
  - 3. Being at any facility which derives a major share of its income from the sale of food or service in addition to the sale of alcohol, as long as the student does not loiter in the bar area.
  - 4. Serving or selling alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products at his/her place of employment, provided it is to a person of legal age, and in the presence of adult supervision at all times, and for an adult who possesses a license for such purposes.
- C. All students involved in co-curricular activities are prohibited from transporting alcoholic beverages or drugs or being in a vehicle in which they are aware that alcoholic beverages or drugs are being transported unless they are accompanied by a parent or

legal guardian.

- D.** All students are prohibited from the usage of WIAA listed banned Performance Enhancing Substances and dietary supplement products.

### **III. PROCEDURE**

- A.** Accusations of any violation of the code of conduct rules set forth in the above paragraph must be submitted in writing to the Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director and must be signed by the accuser.
- B.** The Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director will conduct a thorough investigation. If the Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director determines a violation has occurred, the accused will be notified, and at least one parent or guardian, as well as the building principal, within 24 hours of such finding of the nature of the accusation, the minimum penalty, and of his/her right to a hearing. If the accused is turned in at the same time for separate violations resulting from different incidents, each accusation will be treated separately.
- C.** The accused will, within 24 hours of notification, either accept the guilt of the accusation or request the Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director to conduct a hearing.
- D.** If the accused accepts the guilt and/or does not request a hearing, the Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director will, in writing, impose the minimum penalty effective the 24<sup>th</sup> hour following notification of the accused.
- E.** If a hearing is requested by the accused or his/her parents or guardians, the Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director will, within 48 hours of said request, organize an Activities Council consisting of one coach (not the coach of the activities season violated by the accused), the building principal, a non-coaching faculty member, a student council advisor and one other parent of an athlete. The Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director will act as chairperson of the council. The council will hear the evidence and render an immediate decision as to guilt or innocence and the terms of the penalty. The Administrator or Athletic/Activity Director will, in writing, impose the designated penalty effective the 48<sup>th</sup> hour following the request for a hearing. The student will not be allowed to participate in any competition until a final decision is made.
- F.** The decision of the Activities Council may be appealed to the Board of Education by either the accused or his/her parents or guardians within 48 hours of said decision. The Board of Education, at their next regularly scheduled meeting or at an earlier special meeting, will hear the appeal and either sustain or set aside the decisions of the Activities Council.
- G.** The time deadlines set forth above are intended to mean normal business days.
- H.** By unanimous vote, a properly convened Activities Council may impose a penalty greater than the minimum penalties set forth above.

#### **IV. MINIMUM PENALTIES (Category I)**

- A. FIRST OFFENSE** - 20% of the season. Loss of all school athletic awards and conference awards for the season(s). Round to the nearest whole number (.5 or more will be rounded up.)
- B. SECOND OFFENSE** – 30% of the season. Loss of all school athletic awards and conference awards for the season(s). Round to the nearest whole number (.5 or more will be rounded up.)
- C. THIRD OFFENSE** – Forfeit eligibility for all activities for one full calendar year.
- D. FOURTH OFFENSE** – An athletic participant shall be prohibited from participating in Oconto Unified School District's activity programs for the remainder of their years in the school system.
- E.** If fewer games remain in the season than the penalty invokes, the suspension is to be continued into the beginning of the next season, in which the suspended participates and completes until the full penalty is served.
- F.** During the suspension, the suspended must continue to attend practices and attend games unless excused for other reasons.
- G.** Failure to comply with any penalty or part penalty above will be treated as a failure to complete the entire penalty and continue the suspension until fully completed.
- H.** By unanimous vote, a properly convened Activities Council may impose a penalty greater than the minimum penalties set forth above.
- I.** Any student who has been penalized under categories A, B, C, or D, and has gone two years without any violation of the athletic code rules, has the option of requesting an Activities Council meeting to request their penalty assessment(s) be reduced by one level. Two possible scenarios:
  - 1.** A student guilty of two offenses who goes two years without an offense could petition to have his/her level reduced to a one-violation status.
  - 2.** A student who was guilty of a fourth violation and went two years without an offense could petition to have his/her penalty reduced to a third violation status and thus participate once again in high school activities.

Note: Season is defined as the total number of games, meets, or matches on the team's schedule. Wrestling and volleyball tournaments, if conducted in a team format, will count as multiple matches. If a student is participating in more than one category activity, the number of events will be combined together. Then the proper percentage of contests will be applied.

#### **V. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PENALTIES**

##### **A. Legal Responsibilities**

A student, while representing the Oconto Unified School District, shall uphold all civil laws and local ordinances during his/her season of competition.



**B. Penalty**

The penalty for breaking civil law or local ordinance shall be assessed by a board consisting of the following:

1. the Activity Director
2. the Principal
3. the Coach/Advisor/Director of activity

**VI. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SCHOOL AND PENALTIES**

- A.** A student, while representing the Oconto Unified School District, will uphold all school rules during his/her season of competition.
- B.** Students must be in attendance at school at all periods of the school day to be eligible to participate in after-school practice, contests, or performances on that day. The only exception is when a student has made arrangements in advance to miss part or all of a school day. These arrangements must be cleared with the coach of the sport and the Principal.
- C.** All students are expected to be in good standing. Suspension, either in or out of school, is an indicator of severe misconduct in school. The coach and school administration will monitor player/participant behavior records and hold all members of the team to the following standards:
1. If a player is suspended in school or out-of-school at any time during the season, they will miss the next one (1) game/match.
  2. Even if a student is not eligible, they are required to be at practice.
- D. Penalties:**  
All penalties for breaking school rules and regulations shall be assessed by the coach and/or school administration. The student-athlete shall abide by these decisions.

**ATTENDANCE**

**SCHOOL, PRACTICE, CONTEST, AND PERFORMANCE**

**I. Responsibilities and Penalties**

**A. Responsibilities**

1. Students must be present at all possible practices, events, and performances to reach this goal. The only reason for a student to miss a practice, event, or performance is due to illness and/or an unavoidable personal business that has been cleared in advance with the coach.
2. Any student suspended in school or out of school will not be allowed to practice or participate in a game/match that evening. Note: In reference to School Responsibilities and Penalties (3-b) above, if a game/match is missed due to suspension on the day of the game/match, it will count as the one (1) game/match that must be missed.
3. A coach may have rules specific to the sport they coach [being approved by the Athletic/Activities Director and/or Principal]. The coach will hand out a written copy and explain all rules he/she expects team members to follow. The coach will also require all participants to return a form signed by a parent/guardian and the student that indicates they have read and understood the coach's specific

rules.

**B. Penalties**

1. The coach will set the number of unexcused absences allowable. Any unexcused absence beyond that number will result in dismissal from the team.
2. The coach will also make known how each specific team rule will be enforced and the possible consequences for the violation of any team rule. These rules and consequences will have the prior approval of the Principal and/or Athletic/Activities Director.

**LOSS OF SCHOOL TIME FOR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

- I. Many times during the school year, our students in co-curricular activities must be excused for part of the school day to travel to the site of the competition. Sometimes they compete during the school day. The Athletic/Activity Director and coaches are encouraged by means of scheduling to keep the loss of school time to a minimum.
  - A. Coaches should give notice to the office when they want students to be excused from classes.
  - B. Coaches should inform teachers by means of an announcement, written notice, or emailed message as to the students competing and the class sessions to be missed at least 24 hours prior to the time of competition.
  - C. Students shall not be excused from classes for the treatment of injuries unless requested by a medical doctor or a certified athletic trainer.
  - D. Students shall not be excused from classes for practice purposes.

**TEAM/GROUP TRAVEL**

- I. A traveling squad (coaches and students) represents the Oconto Unified School District away from home. In such cases, the responsibility of the school toward its students and school personnel does not change, nor do the obligations of the traveling squad change.
- II. The director/advisor/coach in charge will make all arrangements for transportation.
- III. Transportation by bus is required when more than two passenger cars would be necessary to make the trip. This involves transportation paid for by the district.
- IV. When cars are used to transport students, the driver must be an Advisor, Teacher, Coach, or a responsible adult approved by the Athletic/Activity Director or Principal.
- V. All passenger cars used to transport students must have adequate insurance coverage.
- VI. Coaches are encouraged to have group members dress in such a manner as to be a credit to their school and community.
- VII. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of the traveling squad members.
- VIII. All students are required to make the round trip via planned transportation.

Exception: A student may return home with a parent/guardian provided the parent/guardian is physically present to sign a release.

## **TEAM/GROUP PRACTICES**

- I. Practice time and place are left to the discretion of the Athletic/Activity Director.
  - A. Practice times will follow a posted schedule.
  - B. Only in very special cases should an Advisor/Coach consider a Saturday/Sunday practice. All such practices shall have the approval of the Principal or Athletic/Activity Director.
  - C. Practice during school vacation periods should be kept to a minimum. Whenever such practices are scheduled, the penalty for a team member who is absent should be previously defined by the advisor and should be consistent for all members of that team.
  - D. Wednesday practice will end by 5:00 P.M.
  - E. When practices are held at an unusual time, clearance must be made through the Athletic/Activity Director or Principal, and notice must be given to the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds via Google Calendar.

## **GENERAL**

### **I. CROWD CONTROL AND/OR BEHAVIOR AT SCHOOL EVENTS**

The Administrator and/or Activity Director will manage and host all home contests or may designate a person to supervise the game in his/her absence.

### **II. ALL-SCHOOL**

- A. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the buildings or on the grounds of the school.
- B. All types of noisemakers, as well as all sorts of projectiles, are prohibited. Antics involving paper airplanes, laser pointers, coin throwing, and the like will subject a violator to ejection from the game and to other penalties as determined by the Administrator or the Athletic/Activity Director.
- C. If banners are used, they must be in good taste.
- D. Only organized and authorized cheerleaders will be permitted to lead cheers.
- E. All fans will exhibit good sportsmanship by showing respect for opponents and for officials.

### **III. GENERAL**

- A. The official colors of the Oconto Unified School District will be royal blue and gold.
- B. The official nickname of our school teams will be the "Blue Devils".
- C. When uniforms are worn during an interscholastic contest, the uniform colors will be the official school colors.

- D. When uniforms are purchased, the Administrator must approve them.

## CO-CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Student participation in interscholastic activities is an opportunity afforded to all boys and girls enrolled in the Oconto Middle School. Interested students and parents/guardians should carefully read this co-curricular handbook which sets forth the rules and regulations required for participation. To be certain that participating students and their parents/guardians are familiar with the co-curricular eligibility policy and are in agreement with the policy, and will be governed by the policy, it is necessary that both the student and the parent/ guardian sign the form at the end of this booklet and return it to school.

## PARENT CONCERNS PROCEDURES

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent(s). It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other person's position. As parents, when your child becomes involved in OUSD programs, you have the right to understand the expectations that coaches and advisors have for your children. Coaches and advisors also have the right to work in a safe and professional environment. This begins with clear communication from the coach or advisor of your child's program. When conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

- A. Your child should have a discussion with the coach or advisor.** Talk to your son or daughter and encourage them to discuss participation issues directly with their coach.

Do not confront the coach or advisor before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for the parents, participants, coaches, and advisors. Meetings at this time do not promote constructive dialogue or resolutions. Wait 24 hours to address the issue unless the issue revolves around student safety, in which administration should be contacted immediately.

- B. Call or email the coach to set up an appointment.** The complaint should not be a part of the original email. The coach will inform the Athletic/Activities Director of the request for the meeting.

- C.** If the coach or advisor can not be reached, please call the Athletic/Activities Director. (Athletic/Activities Director response could be "If the meeting did not provide a satisfactory resolution, you may...")

Contact the Athletic/Activities Director to discuss the situation. Any additional meetings, if appropriate, will be determined after the Athletic/Activities Director has spoken to all parties involved.

If the parent believes the situation has not been resolved, the building principal will be the next point of contact.

### Appropriate items to discuss with coaches and advisors:

1. Ways to provide support to your extra-curricular participant.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

These are issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches and advisors:

1. Playing time or participation levels.
2. Team strategies and game planning.
3. Play calling and decision-making.
4. Issues related to other students or athletes, unless it is due to their health/welfare.

Both parenting and coaching are difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other party involved and, in turn, benefit the participant. Research shows involvement in extracurricular activities leads to greater success in adulthood. Character traits such as leadership, communication, respect, integrity, and teamwork promote a successful post-school life.

**Note: Anonymous letters to administrators or school board members will not be considered because they can not be investigated.**

## **NUTRITION TIPS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

When students practice or have competitions after school, it is strongly suggested that they eat a simple, healthy snack prior to that time so their bodies have the necessary carbs & protein for their upcoming physical exercise. The following are some possibilities: peanut butter & jelly sandwich, granola bar, apple & peanut butter, banana, grapes, trail mix that contains dried fruit, nuts, & chocolate. Students should also drink up to 24 ounces of water in the hour before practice or competition to stay hydrated and have a personal water bottle available during physical activity. Without this hydration and snack intake, student-athletes may experience headaches, cramps, and fatigue.

It is also important in the first hour after practice ends that students help rebuild muscle by eating or drinking a simple protein such as chocolate or strawberry milk, yogurt smoothies, cheese, raw nuts or sunflower seeds, etc.

# **ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES AGREEMENT**

## **STUDENT'S AGREEMENT**

I agree to assume full responsibility for all equipment issued to me and to confine the use of that equipment to practice, games, or meets.

I will further agree to pay for any and all equipment that I may lose, misplace, or damage.

I agree to abide by all rules and regulations set forth in the activities handbook.

***Students will sign this agreement on the Permission to Treat Form. When signed, this agreement pertains to the current year in which said student is eligible to participate in co-curricular activities in the Oconto Unified School District.***

## **PARENT'S AGREEMENT**

I, the parent/guardian of the above student, have read the policies and rules set forth for co-curricular participation in Oconto Middle School and give my permission to my child to participate under those conditions. I am aware that my child could be injured while participating in co-curricular activities. I give my consent to the attending physician at the co-curricular event to give first aid emergency care to my child should such assistance be required. I also agree to assume responsibility for loss, misplacement, or damage to school equipment issued to or used by my child.

***Parent/Guardian will sign this agreement on the Permission to Treat Form. When signed, this agreement pertains to the current year in which said student is eligible to participate in co-curricular activities in the Oconto Unified School District.***