

## LETTER TO STUDENTS/PARENTS RE: GOOD CONDUCT RULE

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Your son or daughter has chosen to augment the regular academic program at *Grinnell-Newburg Schools* by participating in extra-curricular activities. As you know, student participation in these programs is a conditional privilege; the students, must, among other things, maintain state academic standards, meet age requirements, and, for athletes, pass a physical exam yearly.

In addition to these requirements, the board of education has established additional rules governing the students who choose to go out for extra-curricular activities, as in doing so they represent the school and depict its character to other students and community members.

We know how important it is for your family that your son or daughter participates. Therefore, it is important that you and your student read and understand the terms imposed by the Good Conduct Policy and Rules; this is why we send this policy home for your review and signature.

Below are some highlights of the policy. Should you or your son/daughter have any questions regarding how the Good Conduct Rule will be interpreted, we encourage you to contact the activities director or principal for clarification.

- The policy is in effect during the calendar year, even when your student is not participating.
- There is a penalty for not coming forward and admitting a violation of the rule. Students are encouraged to "self-report" within 72 hours to a coach or activity sponsor, the activities director or the principal.
- If a student is suspended from school for some reason, the student will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities during the term of suspension regardless of whether the conduct underlying the suspension is also a Good Conduct violation.
- Age is no defense to a violation involving the purchase, possession, or use of tobacco. The prohibition against tobacco is not just because it's illegal for minors; it is unhealthy and its use doesn't befit a representative of our school.
- Students going to foreign countries or other states or territories where the drinking age may be lower and they can possibly drink "legally" may still not consume alcoholic beverages without endangering their eligibility.
- A parent's approval does not automatically excuse a violation.
- An arrest is not necessary for the school to impose a penalty for a violation of the Good Conduct Rule. The student will be given due process of law by being told by a school official why the school believes he or she has violated the Rule and what evidence exists for that belief. Then the student will be given an opportunity to tell his or her side of the story before a decision is made about the student's eligibility. This hearing is between the student and school officials, although you as parent or guardian will be notified of the decision if school officials believe a violation has occurred.
- Similarly, if a student is arrested or cited by law enforcement, the school will not always await the outcome of the case in court. The school will conduct its own

investigation and due process hearing, reaching a result independent of the juvenile or criminal justice system.

- The school board believes strongly in the message that minors should not use alcohol or other illegal drugs. Therefore, the board has included a requirement in the Good Conduct Rule often referred to as the "mere presence" rule. This means that students who are out for extra-curricular activities may not knowingly be in attendance at a function (at a party, or in a vehicle) where drugs or alcohol are being used or possessed by minors **even if they, themselves, are not actively drinking or using illegal drugs**. The policy and rule provide that upon discovering that contraband (alcohol or drugs) is present, the student must (a) leave within a reasonable time, get rid of the offending substance, or stay and risk loss of eligibility. We hope and believe that this rule will discourage beer parties and driving around in cars drinking alcohol or using drugs, both common teenage activities that are unhealthy, illegal and very dangerous.

Some may question the fairness of a rule that imposes ineligibility on a student for just being at a party or in a car and knowing this type of illegal activity is going on. You may think the student should be rewarded for acting as "designated driver" and refraining from illegal use of drugs or alcohol. But we believe that the student who represents this school is looked up to and emulated by other students, including younger children, and he or she should not appear to condone illegal, unhealthy and dangerous activities or enable other students to engage in them. Your support in this matter would be a wonderful way to cooperate with the school and send the message to your children that you are concerned about their health and moral character.

Thank you for taking the time to go through the policy and rules with your family. Again, please feel free to contact the school if you have any questions. Your signature(s) represent understanding and agreement with the conditions imposed upon students for extra-curricular activities at ***Grinnell-Newburg Schools***.

Attachment (Good Conduct Policy/Rule)

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Student Participant's Signature

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Parent/Guardian Signature