

**CATO-MERIDIAN
CENTRAL SCHOOL**



**Interscholastic
Parent/Student
Handbook**

Dear Parents:

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Cato-Meridian Athletic Program. As your son or daughter enters into our program, it will enable Cato-Meridian to continue the fine tradition that has been established through the years of successful participation in interscholastic athletics.

The Cato-Meridian Athletic Program would like to take this opportunity to discuss a very sensitive but important issue in our program – SAFETY. Our philosophy stresses safety at all levels of competition. Therefore, we strive to conduct all activities in the safest possible manner.

Although we strive to minimize athletic injuries, we all know that they are a part of athletics. By following all rules and regulations outlined in this Interscholastic Parent/Student Handbook, and by following all coach's rules and instructions, the student athlete can help prevent or minimize injuries during competitions.

Parents must be aware that with athletic participation comes a certain risk of injuries. Any athlete that participates in athletics at Cato-Meridian Central School District is always at risk. Although national statistics indicate there are fewer injuries related to supervised activity, as opposed to unsupervised activity, injuries can and do occur.

Most athletic injuries are minor in nature, ranging from pulled muscles to broken bones. However, under the safest conditions, more serious injuries can and do occur. These injuries could range from permanent paralysis to death. I realize that these are not comforting words to hear, but it is our feeling that parents should be informed of all aspects of the athletic program, not only the positive ones. We need you to be informed of these risks so that you can make an educated decision as to your child's participation in athletic sports.

Our dedicated coaching staff's primary focus is to coach to the best interest of the team and its athletes. Your support of their decisions will greatly enhance the athletic experience. Public criticism or second-guessing undermines the good work being done and places the athlete in the middle. If a concern arises, please do not hesitate to contact the coach. If you would like to discuss the situation further, please feel free to call the athletic director.

Thank you for the support you all provide our school district and I wish everyone a safe and productive sports season.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Wren

Director of Athletics, Coordinator of Student Services
Cato-Meridian High School
2851 Route 370.
Cato, New York 13033
(315) 626-3439 ext 3806

Students SUBJECT: JUNIOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

The Cato-Meridian School is proud to provide opportunities and privileges to students, including but not limited to the following:

- a) Athletic teams.
- b) Field trip opportunities that are not part of required coursework.
- c) Extra Curricular Clubs and Activities.

In order to participate in these opportunities, students must first be successful academically. Therefore, any student receiving two (2) failing grades will be deemed academically ineligible from all above listed activities for the week following the determination. The following details will further elaborate:

- a) Performance based upon pass/fail for the week immediately preceding the rating will be indicated on a sheet to be turned in by each teacher on Friday morning and submitted to the Junior Senior High Secretary/Athletic Assistant. Any grade below 65 is reflective of a failing grade. Teachers have the discretion to allow a student to maintain eligibility based on effort and participation in afterschool sessions. In addition, students with disabilities and BOCES students will be given additional opportunities for support. Our goal is to guide students into successful eligibility. Efforts will be made to communicate with students and families regarding academic standing.
- b) The list will be collated and posted each Monday by 8 a.m., and the ineligibility as determined by this list will be effective for one (1) week from Monday to Monday at 8:00 am.
- c) Athletic ineligibility will mean that the student will be expected to practice with the team, but will not be permitted to participate in any athletic contest during that time period.
- d) An ineligible student will be allowed to participate in only those field trips that are a required part of the coursework for a specific class, and for which follow-up in the classroom is provided. Each respective teacher will inform the principal's office when such conditions exist.
- e) Students who fail two or more courses for the last marking period will be ineligible for two weeks in August/September (three weeks if summer school is needed yet the student chooses not to attend or fails multiple courses in summer school). For the purpose of extra-curricular activities that begin prior to September, the ineligibility will begin when the activity (season) begins.

- f) Passing a course in summer school will erase any pending ineligibility period in September only for that course.
- g) Appeals to the principal must be in writing and can only be made/upheld if the student substantiates that an error was made in the calculation of the grade.
- h) The superintendent or his/her designee has final authority to determine eligibility status for activities or situations not delineated under this policy.
- i) This Policy is applicable to students in grades 7 through 12.

Adopted: 11/8/2021

PHILOSOPHY

The Cato-Meridian Central School District understands that interscholastic athletics are a significant part of the educational process. The combination of academics and athletics enhances the quality of students' lives and expands their options for learning and personal growth. Athletics provide an educational opportunity in which students can learn essential life lessons beyond those that can be learned in an academic classroom.

The interscholastic competitive environment provides an opportunity for our participants to learn positive life skills, values and ethics in a climate that demands dedication, responsibility, self-discipline, cooperation, positive work ethics and respect for others. This program provides an opportunity for all to share their common interests, to celebrate their differences, and to appreciate physical competitions as a lifelong process.

All involved in the program must show a personal commitment to the goals of the team, and make the personal sacrifices necessary in order to achieve success. Making such a commitment to excellence nurtures a sense of pride, loyalty and leadership qualities in an athlete, enabling the individual to become more resilient and better prepared to face life's challenges. This unique experience allows students to achieve their full potential as students, athletes and citizens.

It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one measure of success. Ultimately, the real challenge is guiding the individual and the team to reach full potential. This is the true measure of achievement. The competitive athletic environment is one that demands respect for a full effort, and applause for those who rise to the challenge and accept the risk of defeat. If one strives towards reaching full potential, with a passion and perseverance, personal victories that last a lifetime are the end reward, even though the win-loss record may not always meet expectations.

PHILOSOPHY BY SPORT LEVEL

Modified

This program of competitive sports focuses on the fundamentals of the game and team play, rules, training, and basic skills. At this introductory level, a large emphasis is placed on academics, sportsmanship, chemical-free lifestyle, and socio-emotional growth along with commitment and dedication. A smaller emphasis is placed on winning and maximum participation is desired. An attempt will be made to play all participants as long as they are in good standing as a team member. It is recognized, however, that they may not all play equally in each game.

Junior Varsity (JV)

The Junior Varsity level of competition is the program where there is an increased emphasis placed upon team play, physical conditioning, and refinement of basic skills. Winning at the Junior Varsity level is considered important and participants should be taught how to cope with game situations and how to win and lose properly. Coaches will try to get players into contests. There will be contests that not every player will receive playing time or play equal time. Playing time is dictated by past experience, past performance, practice performance, injuries, conditioning, attitude, work ethic, present game performance, need, and score. At the Junior Varsity level it is most important to put the best team forward and get the team prepared for the varsity level.

Varsity

The Varsity level of athletic competition is the culmination of the high school athletic program. Team play, sportsmanship, individual physical ability, motivation, and mental attitude are all very important aspects of competition at the varsity level. The team definitely plays to win the contest but varsity contestants should accept the fact that important lessons are to be learned from losing. There continues to be very strong emphasis on academics, sportsmanship, chemical-free life style, and community service. It is recognized that not all participants may play in every contest or receive equal playing time.

Meridian currently offers the following athletic opportunities:

<u>FALL</u>	
Varsity Football	Modified Football
Varsity Field Hockey	Modified Field Hockey
Varsity and Modified Boys Soccer with Jordan Elbridge	
Varsity Girls Soccer with Hannibal	Modified Girls Soccer
Varsity Girls Cross Country	Modified Girls Cross Country
Varsity Boys Cross Country	Modified Boys Cross Country
Varsity Cheerleading	
Varsity Girls Volleyball	JV Girls Volleyball
<u>Winter</u>	
Varsity Boys Basketball	JV Boys Basketball 7 and 8 Boys Basketball
Varsity Girls Basketball	JV Girls Basketball 7 and 8 Girls Basketball
7 and 8 Girls Volleyball	
Varsity Wrestling with Jordan Elbridge, Port Byron, and Union Springs	
7 and 8 Wrestling	
Varsity Cheerleading	Unified Bowling
<u>Spring</u>	
Varsity Baseball	Modified Baseball
Varsity Softball	JV Softball 7 and 8 Softball
Varsity Girls Track	Modified Girls Track
Varsity Boys Track	Modified Boys Track
Boys and Girls Modified and Varsity Lacrosse with Jordan Elbridge	

Athletic Placement Process (APP)

The Athletic Placement Process has been developed for a few select students who benefit from such placement because of their level of readiness. The APP was revised to assess a student's physical and emotional maturation, physical fitness, and sport skill, so that a student may be placed at a level of competition that should result in increased opportunity, a fairer competitive environment, minimized risk, and greater personal satisfaction. The APP is used only when an individual athlete's athletic skills warrant moving to the commencement or intermediate sport competition level, and therefore, it should be initiated by the Athletic Director, physical education director, or physical education staff. It is not the intent to evaluate all modified students, and evaluation should be considered only for those students with the appropriate

physical and emotional readiness, and whose athletic abilities are outside of those of their age-related peers.

If a student has attained an appropriate level of physical maturity, and has a height and weight that are comparable to those of the proposed team members as determined by the medical director, they may proceed to the next level of skills assessment by the athletic/physical education director. If the medical director does not clear the student to participate in the desired sport and level due to the student not attaining the appropriate physical maturity level, he or she may not proceed any further in the evaluation process. If a student is determined to be comparable with the physical size and maturity of the average age and sex of the students against whom they wish to compete, but fails to meet more than one of the physical fitness test standards, or if a student fails to meet an appropriate sport skill level as determined by the coach, he or she may not proceed any further in the evaluation process. An athlete may not be approved to participate by the medical director due to health impairment and/or the student's physical maturation level. In addition, all student-athletes are requested to sign up for their current grade level team. A physical screening must be administered by a physician. Each student athlete must pass the physical fitness test. Each athlete that successfully completes this process will then be allowed to try-out the specific sport. The athlete must participate in three of the first five practice days. The student athlete may be assigned to JV or Varsity level according to his/her ability in the sport, or may return to an appropriate level if the athlete's ability is determined to be lower than that of the desired level. If a student athlete is placed at a higher level, that student may not return to a modified level in that particular sport at any time in the future. If the student practices one day over the permitted try-out period for that specific sport they are not permitted to go back to the modified level.

If your child successfully meets the requirements of the APP, he or she will be allowed to try out for competitive high school athletics during 7th and/or 8th grade(s), or compete at the modified level if in grades 9-12. Under normal circumstances, a student is eligible for senior high school athletic competition in a sport for only four consecutive seasons, beginning with the student's entry into the ninth grade. However, by meeting the Athletic Placement Process requirements established by NYSED, your child's eligibility can be extended to permit:

- a) participation during five consecutive seasons in the approved sport after entry into the eighth grade; or
- b) participation during six consecutive seasons in the approved sport after entry into the seventh grade.

It is important for you and your child to understand that, once the requirements are met and if he/she is accepted as a member of the team, he or she cannot return to a lower-level team (modified) in that sport in that season. Remember, at the higher level of play your child will be exposed to the social atmosphere that is common among older students in a high school environment. Therefore, it is important to take into account your child's ability to handle the additional demands.

Athletic Awards

Varsity awards (letters) and certificates will be awarded to all athletes who start the season in good academic standing, attend practices and games, and complete the season in good academic and team standing. Any athlete that becomes academically ineligible more than once per season will not be eligible to qualify for a varsity letter or pin. The athlete will only receive a certificate of participation. If the athlete violates any policy of the Interscholastic Parent/Student Handbook, the post season awards will be determined by the coach and athletic director. Additionally, when an athlete becomes academically ineligible or violates any policy of the Interscholastic Parent/Student Handbook, the athlete will not receive any credit towards a Senior Cup Award. The first time you play a varsity sport the athlete is awarded a varsity chenille letter. Every subsequent sport you letter in, you receive a pin for that specific sport and a certificate. JV awards (certificates) will be awarded to athletes who start and end the season in good standing. Athletes that become academically ineligible more than once during the season at any level will not receive an award. The athlete will receive a participation certificate.

Modified athletes will receive a participation certificate award.

THIS POLICY IS IN EFFECT from July 1 through June 30th of each school year, and applies to all Student Athletes in grades seven through twelve.

Attendance Policy (Per Board of Education Policy #7422)

A student must be in full day attendance, be in compliance with the tardy policy (See Student-Parent Handbook), except for eligible excuses. The student must also be in attendance for the full day preceding a weekend or vacation contest. Repeated absences or tardiness on the day before or the day after a contest will result in ineligibility. Ineligibility will also result from school or repeated class truancy.

Only legal excuses according to the New York State attendance policy will be honored and verified as an exception to the attendance policy. Eligible excuses are as follows:

1. Illness
2. Sickness or death in the family
3. Impassable roads due to weather
4. Religious observance
5. Required court appearances
6. Quarantine
7. Doctor's appointment*/health clinics*
8. Attendance at health clinics
9. Approved college visitations
10. Approved cooperative work programs
11. Military obligations
12. Any other reason for absence may be judged by the Board of Education

*** A student will be required to submit a written statement from a physician when they return from a Doctor's appointment during the school day.**

Any athlete that spends time in the in-school suspension room more than one period on any given day, or receives out of school suspension for any disciplinary infraction will not be allowed to practice or participate in any contest until reinstated back to school. Any athlete who is serving a disciplinary

infraction that is for two or less periods a day, for a series of days, will only be ineligible for the first day served.

Student athletes must be prepared for and actively participate in Physical Education class to be eligible to practice or play in the next contest.

Unexcused Absence and Unexcused Tardiness

Any unexcused absence from or tardiness to practice will not be tolerated. When an athlete will be absent from practice, his/her coach should be notified as soon as possible. This is not necessary when the athlete is absent from school. Violations will result in reprimand, suspension, or dismissal depending on the severity of the offense.

Family Vacations

When parents and student athletes choose to take family vacations during a sports season, it must be understood that time missed by the student athlete can affect team chemistry and personal conditioning. Student athletes who miss practices or competition for any reason may have their position or playing time adjusted.

Cato-Meridian Athletic Training Rules

Students that participate in athletics must meet certain requirements to be considered eligible. These requirements include:

1. Maintaining bona fide student status-taking at least four subjects including Physical Education.
2. Students must have a physical (*must be valid before the season starts*) and be cleared by the school nurse and school physician.
3. Abiding by specific team conduct and training rules established by his/her coach, in addition to the overall program regulations.

Changing/Quitting a Sports Team

Quitting an athletic team is strongly discouraged. If an athlete wants to quit a team to join another, he/she must obtain consent from the coaches involved. If an athlete is cut from a team and wants to join another, he/she will be permitted to do so. After fourteen calendar days from the first day of practice of the season, athletes will not be allowed to quit a team to avoid compliance with the Code of Conduct for Student Athletes. Athletes who choose to quit a team will be deemed ineligible to participate in the next sport season that the athlete usually participates in. For example: A student plays football and quits the team. The next season that the athlete participates in is in the spring, so the athlete would not be eligible to participate. If a parent removes a student from the team, the Athletic Director shall determine what will be the next season the student is eligible to participate.

THIS POLICY IS IN EFFECT from July 1 through June 30th of each school year, and applies to all Student Athletes in grades seven through twelve.

Level 1 – Violations

1. Student athletes will adhere to individual team rules.

2. Student athletes will return school equipment and uniforms at the end of the season, or they will not be eligible to participate in any other sport until matter has been resolved.
3. Student athletes will dress appropriately and participate in scheduled physical education classes to be eligible to practice or play in the next contest.
4. Student athletes will not engage in activities or actions which bring discredit to the school program or team as determined by the coach, athletic director or principal.
5. Student athletes will be responsible for theft or damage to uniforms, money, or school property.
6. Athletes will not be absent from practices or games to attend sports, clubs, or recreational type activities. In-season interscholastic programs take priority over these activities.
7. Student athletes will not violate the Social Media for Students acknowledgement and Consent Form rules.

Level 1 – Consequences

Decisions regarding the enforcement of the Level 1 consequences for the first and second offenses are made by the individual coach(es), who submit a written report to the athletic director regarding the violation and the consequences imposed as a result of the violation. All third offenses will be reviewed by the coach and athletic director to determine the consequences.

1st Offense: A first offense penalty may range from an official warning to exclusion from athletics for up to 14 calendar days. Post-season awards will be determined by the coach and athletic director.

2nd Offense: A second offense penalty may range from exclusion from athletics for up to 21 calendar days, which could be carried over to the next season of participation. Post-season awards will be determined by the coach and athletic director.

During the period of suspension, the student athlete is ineligible to participate in any contests or team activities for the duration of the suspension. The coach, athletic director and principal will determine whether the suspended student athlete will participate in practices and/or attend contests. In no case will the suspended student athlete dress in a school uniform.

THIS POLICY IS IN EFFECT from July 1 through June 30th of each school year, and applies to all Student Athletes in grades seven through twelve

Level 2 – Violations

A penalty will be imposed on student athletes who commit any of the following:

1. Use, possess, sell, distribute or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs or performance enhancing substances (e.g., caffeine pills, steroids, synthetic drug), whether legal or illegal, possess or use of any prescription drug that does not belong to you, look-alike drugs, or drug paraphernalia on school grounds, off school grounds, whether during sport season or out of sport season.

2. Possess or use any tobacco products and/or electronic cigarettes, for the purpose of this handbook, “tobacco” is defined to include any lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, bidi, clove cigarette, electronic cigarettes and any other smoking product; and smokeless or spit tobacco, also known as dip, chew, snuff or snus in any form.

“Smoking” is defined as inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, or any other lighted or heated tobacco or other product intended for inhalation, in any manner or in any form. Smoking also includes the use of an e-cigarette which creates vapor, in any manner or any form, or the use of any oral device for the purpose of circumventing the prohibition of smoking in this handbook.

“E-cigarette” means any electronic oral device, such as one composed of a heating element, battery, and/or electronic circuit, which provides a vapor of nicotine or any other substances for inhalation. The term shall include any device, whether manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, e-pipe, or under any other product name or descriptor, but does not include any product specifically approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in medical treatment, such as an asthma inhaler.

3. Use, possess, or distribute firearms, weapons or explosive devices on school grounds or at school events.

4. Engage in illegal gambling activities.

5. Engage in harassing behaviors that include: verbal threats, threatening, hazing activities, bullying, cyber bullying, vandalism, intimidation, retaliation or abuse, conduct or speech based on a persons’ actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion/religious practices, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, or perceived gender, protected federal rights, or other personal misconduct, including, but not limited to, conduct that involves police or court action.

6. Will not engage in indecent exposure at any time or at any place.

