

Natural Resources Commission
Hunnewell Track and Field Use Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to create a framework for coordinating on the amount, type, and purpose of use of lights on the Hunnewell Track and Field. As the land owner, the Natural Resources Commission is responsible for setting policy on use of the fields, including light and sound, and ensuring its enforcement. The School Committee represents a priority user group and is responsible for planning, managing, budgeting, and operating the lights on the field with support from the Department of Public Works on maintenance and operations as well as Wellesley Police for parking and public safety at major Wellesley High School events (as defined below).

The NRC recognizes that the Hunnewell Track and Field lights enable the Wellesley Public Schools and the Town to enhance opportunities for WHS athletes; however, the use of the Track and Field lights can have a negative impact on surrounding neighborhoods. The following regulations shall guide the use of the Track and Field lights. This policy is intended to define use parameters as an addendum to the policy outlined in the [Natural Resources Commission Law, Policy, & Regulations Handbook 2017](#), §3 on Park and Conservation Lands.

Visitors to the field are expected to be respectful of the neighborhood surrounding Hunnewell Track and Field, including WHS and its facilities, by strictly adhering to the Policy, including posted traffic and field signage, and taking special care to minimize noise, trash, and other impacts to the neighborhood. Schools and Town users are expected to communicate this policy regularly to student athletes, visiting teams, and game attendees.

1. Night Games

WHS athletic games draw a number of families and friends to participate in the athletic experience of their students. While there is significant school and community value to these well-attended evening sports events, football games have the greatest impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Therefore, the following outlines the use of the Track and Field after daylight hours for all school sports, including football games:

A. Number of WHS Games and Additional Use

- Every effort will be made by WHS to schedule half of their games as away games.
- Night games are defined as games scheduled to begin on or after 6:00 pm.
- WHS may schedule up to **15 night games under lights in any given academic year**, exclusive of home playoff games requested by MIAA/Bay State Conference and WHS where WHS is one of the participating teams.
- The Town may ask the NRC to allow a 1 evening town-sponsored event per fiscal year.

B. Use of Lights

- Competition level lighting shall be dimmed no later than 10 minutes after completion of any game.
- Lights may remain on after completion of any game solely to allow for Track and Field cleanup and safe crowd egress.
- For night games, lights shall be **off no later than 9:30pm**. If game delays, safety, or other

exigent circumstances require later lighting use, this must be communicated in real time to the NRC at nrcmembers@wellesleyma.gov.

2. Day Games and Practices

- For day games, lights shall be **off no later than 7:00pm**. If game delays, safety, or other exigent circumstances require later lighting use, this must be communicated in real time to the NRC at nrcmembers@wellesleyma.gov.

3. Night Practices

- WHS may schedule up to **6 night practices during a school year**.
- The lights must be **off no later than 9:00pm**. Practices should end before 9:00pm to allow time for safe egress.

4. WHS Graduation

- Lights may be used on the first Friday in June until 9:00pm for WHS graduation exercises.

5. Feedback and operational improvement:

In addition to the established mechanisms for receiving community feedback, the NRC and School Committee shall host at least 2 community forums a year for the first two academic years that the lights are in operation. Representatives from DPW and the Wellesley Police will be invited to attend. In addition to standard agenda postings, the NRC will notify abutters of the meetings directly. The public forum will offer an opportunity to reviewing existing lighting policies and lighting usage reports as well as neighborhood impact from usage of the lights.

6. Miscellaneous

- WHS' use of the Track and Field shall adhere to the general use of playing fields guidelines in the NRC's Policy Handbook §3, especially the NRC's Special Regulations for the Use of Playing Fields in §3-4.
- The following are the proper contacts in the event of a violation of this Policy:
 - *For urgent police and public safety matters or traffic-related issues:* Chief Scott Whittemore ((781) 235-1212) and Lt. Scott Showstead (sshowstead@wellesleyma.gov)
 - *For all other issues related to WHS practices and games held on the Track & Field:* John Brown, Athletic Director (brownj@wellesleyps.org)
 - *Comments / concerns relating to non-school use of the fields or any other matter:* Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director (bschmitt@wellesleyma.gov)

The NRC is not bound by any limitations herein in the event of an emergency.

Policy adopted: September 16, 2024