

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN UPDATING YOUR ATHLETIC/EXTRACURRICULAR HANDBOOK

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SUGGESTED CONTENTS FOR YOUR STUDENT/PARENT ATHLETIC/EXTRACURRICULAR HANDBOOK

- Introduction
 - Philosophy governing participation
 - Objectives of extracurricular activities
 - Privilege v. right
- Scope of jurisdiction
- Expectations for athletes
- Expectations for parents
- Academic eligibility (both OHSAA and local)
 - Age and enrollment
 - Grades
 - Residency
 - Transfers
 - “Non-traditional” participants
- Participation fees
- Insurance
- Hazing (and bullying and harassment)
- Training rules
 - Drug/alcohol/tobacco policy
 - Use of facilities/weight room
 - Open gym policies
 - Participation in outside events
- Care of equipment
- Injuries and protocols for return to practice/competition (CONSISTENT-all sports)
- Transportation
 - To and from practice and contests
 - Bus rules
 - With parents/friends
- Cancellations (Contests and practices) League, conference rules
- Banquets and awards
- Discipline and appeal procedures
- Technology and social media - for coaches/advisors as well as students

- **Unruly spectators** You may not need a policy, but it makes life easier

- **Vacation during season** – again, consistency is important

- **Dual participation and conflicts** - NO reprisals

- Fundraising

- Booster groups

- **Contact information**

- Whom to contact and how

- Table of contents or index

SUGGESTED CONTENTS FOR YOUR COACHES/ADVISORS ATHLETIC/EXTRACURRICULAR HANDBOOK

- Introduction
 - Philosophy governing participation
 - Objectives of extracurricular activities
 - Privilege v. right
- Code of Conduct for coaches
- Job descriptions and responsibilities
- Certification requirements
- Guidelines for facilities usage
- Expectations for athletes
- Expectations for parents
- Academic eligibility (both OHSAA and local)
 - Age and enrollment
 - Grades
 - Residency
 - Transfers
 - “Non-traditional” participants
- Participation fees
- Insurance
- Hazing (and bullying and harassment)
- Training rules
 - Drug/alcohol/tobacco policy
 - Use of facilities/weight room
 - Open gym policies
 - Participation in outside events
- Care of equipment
- Injuries and protocols for return to practice/competition
- Transportation
 - To and from practice and contests
 - Bus rules
 - With parents/friends

- Cancellations
- Banquets and awards
- Discipline and appeal procedures
- Technology and social media
- Unruly spectators
- Vacation during season
- Dual participation and conflicts
- Fundraising
- Booster groups
- Contact information
- Whom to contact and how
- Forms
 - Evaluation forms
 - Building/Facility use permit
 - Incident report
 - Injury report
 - Inventory reports
 - Physical exam/parent consent form
 - Emergency Medical
 - Fundraiser request
 - Transportation request
 - Eligibility checklist
 - Any “sign-off” forms
- Table of contents or index

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR ATHLETIC/EXTRACURRICULAR HANDBOOKS

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SAMPLE LANGUAGE

The following examples are samples of language that appear in athletic and extracurricular handbooks from across the state of Ohio. There is no intent to offer these as recommended language.

Introductions:

1) The sections in this handbook describe the responsibilities, requirements and policies set by the administration of the _____ School District. It is imperative that athletes, parents, coaches, sponsors and all responsible individuals become acquainted with its contents, together with the handbook of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. A copy of both the OHSAA Handbook and the Handbook Governing Athletics and Activities for _____ High School are kept on file in the principal's office. It is the responsibility of all to abide by the rules of the OHSAA Handbook, and the handbook adopted for _____ Schools.

Ignorance of the rules is not excusable. Personal disagreement with the rules is not an acceptable reason for not following the rules. No exceptions will be made to any of the rules, policies or guidelines contained in this manual.

2) The _____ School District Athletic Policy Handbook has been prepared as a guide to give definition and direction to the Athletic Program of the _____ Schools.

The Athletic Department and Staff will continue to evaluate the Athletic Program and Practices outlined within the Handbook. It will be revised annually for the purpose of keeping regulations current, making revisions, additions and improvements. The Athletic Department is committed to providing the best possible interscholastic program for the youth of the _____ School District.

3) The _____ Local School District Board of Education recognizes the value of interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities in the educational process and the values that young people develop when they have the opportunity to participate in activities outside of the traditional classroom. Participation in high school athletics in the _____ Local School District, the Ohio High School Athletic Association or the National Federation of High School Athletics is not a right but a privilege which may be regulated by the Forest Hills Board of Education.

Prior to participating in an official practice or tryout session for any interscholastic sport, each student athlete must: Pass a physical examination by a registered physician and the copy of such examination must be on file in the athletic office. Properly fill out and turn in an Emergency Medical Form.

Prior to participating in the first contest for any interscholastic sport, each student athlete must: Pay participation fee (\$140 High School / \$100 Middle School). CHECKS ONLY please, made payable to _____ School District, and attend the pre--season rules meeting with Athletic Director and Coach.

Expectations for student-athletes:

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Since student athletes are in a highly visible position, they are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times which will positively reflect on them, their family, the team, the school, and the community.

Student athletes who participate in the Interscholastic Athletic Program in the _____ Local Schools are expected to adhere to the Basic School Policies and the Student Discipline Code as listed in the Student Handbook and adopted by the _____ Local School District Board of Education. The Code of Student Conduct, including the Administrative Actions which result from discipline infractions, applies to all student athletes. Moreover, a student athlete can be denied participation in contests or removed from a team for a breach of the Student Discipline Code or a violation of policies established by the OHSAA and the Athletic Department, including a violation of the Training Rules and/or specific Team Rules established by the coaching staffs of individual sports.

A Student Athlete, who is disciplined in school for a breach of the Student Discipline Code, must understand that it may directly affect their ability to participate in athletics.

1. A student who serves a detention after school may be late for a practice or contest which may result in further disciplinary actions from the coach.
2. A student who is suspended, in-school or out-of-school, would not be allowed to participate in practices or contests during the length of his or her suspension. This may also result in further disciplinary actions from the coach.

As a prospective student athlete, you are expected to accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing your school and community while participating in interscholastic athletics. School and Athletic Department personnel expect you to treat opponents with respect; accept the judgment of contest officials; abide by contest rules; display no behavior that could incite fans or other participants in the contest or which is intended to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances; cooperate with officials, your coaches and other participants to ensure a fair contest; live up to the high standard of sportsmanship that has been established by the _____ Local School District.

Expectations for parents:

1)

- A. Carefully evaluate the commitments of your son/daughter in time, cost and transportation before granting permission for his/her participation.
- B. Understand the training rules and procedures to be followed by the athlete. After their inspection of the rules, parents must sign the Athletic Responsibility Acknowledgement Card prior to their son/daughter's participation.
- C. Sign a Medical Insurance Waiver, Physical Exam Card, Emergency Medical Form, OHSAA Bulletin and a Residency Report Card prior to your son/daughter's participation. Please notify the athletic office of any changes in the information that is provided on these documents.
- D. When possible, schedule doctor, dental and all other outside appointments so that they do not conflict with practice or game times.
- E. Take an honest interest in your son/daughter's participation in athletics. Make an effort not to put unreasonable pressure on them to be a starter.
- F. Help support and enforce all training rules.
- G. Try to resolve any problems or complaints with the coach before approaching the Athletic Director, Principal, Superintendent, or Board of Education. Try to make phone calls of a non-emergency nature during school hours and/or reasonable hours.
- H. Realize that work and vacations are not acceptable reasons for your child to miss practice or games.
- I. Be supportive of all athletic programs. We encourage parents to join our Athletic Booster Club & athletic volunteer staff. Your help is needed for our programs to succeed.
- J. Focus your attention on supporting our student/athletes giving their best effort while enjoying a positive experience. Demonstrate good sportsmanship toward all who are involved in attending, participating, and working at all school athletic events.

As a Parent, I agree to abide by the following:

- 1. Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, fans and officials at games, practices and other sporting events.
- 2. Place the well-being of my child before a personal desire to win.
- 3. Encourage my child to play by the rules and respect the rights of other players, coaches, fans and officials.
- 4. When a concern arises I will contact my child's coach twenty-four hours after a contest by phone or email for the sole purpose of making an appointment. No other issues will be discussed or mentioned in this communication.
- 5. Once a meeting time has been agreed upon my child and I will both attend the meeting. Playing time, playing position and other parents or players will not be discussed at this meeting.

2) We are pleased that your son/daughter has chosen to participate in the interscholastic athletic program of the _____ School District. A goal of the athletic department is to provide our student athletes with the best environment in which their sport experience may be as rewarding as possible. We believe that this goal may not be realized without appropriate lines of communication available to all parties involved. This "Communication Guide" has been developed to help coaches, parents, administrators and student athletes communicate more effectively.

Communication You Should Expect From The Coach

- Philosophy of the coach.
- Expectations the coach may have for your child and the team.
- Location and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements i.e. fees, special equipment, eligibility, attendance, off-season conditioning, etc.
- Procedures to follow should your child become injured during participation.
- Athletic Code of Behavior policy and any additional rules that may affect your child's participation.
- Requirements to earn a letter.
- Disposition of lost/outstanding equipment at the end of the season.

Communication The Coach Should Expect From Parents And Athletes

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach **first**.
- Notification of schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Special needs of the athlete i.e. physical limitations that may not be obvious to the coach.

Appropriate Concerns To Discuss With The Coach

- The treatment of your child mentally and physically.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

As your child becomes involved in the various athletic programs of the _____ School District, it is our hope that he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his/her life. It is important to understand that things may not always go as you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach may be desirable (in fact is encouraged) to clear up the issue and avoid any misunderstanding.

Areas Not Appropriate To Discuss With The Coach

- Playing Time/Position Assignment
- Team Strategy/Play Calling
- Matters concerning other student athletes

Many aspects of the highly emotional and dynamic setting of interscholastic athletics are often questioned. These may include decisions made by coaches, administration, officials, athletes, parents, and fans. As you have seen from the previous list, certain concerns can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other items must be left to the discretion of the coach. Our coaches are professionals. They make judgment

decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student athletes under the circumstances present.

Procedure To Follow If You Have A Concern To Discuss With The Coach

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and parent. Such a meeting is encouraged when necessary. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other person's position. Each should be willing to listen. The following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution of the issue.

- Contact the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached after a reasonable period of time, call the High School Athletic Director or Assistant to the Director of Student Activities. An appointment with the coach will be arranged for you.
- **Important...** Please **do not** confront a coach before or after a contest or practice session. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution and in fact often escalate the issue.

The Next Step

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution? Although total agreement may not always be reached, most often such a meeting does afford the opportunity for productive discussion and better understanding. If the parent desires further communication, please call the High School Athletic Director or Assistant to the Director of Student Activities to discuss the situation. The appropriate next step will be determined.

Chain of Command

The _____ School District, in conjunction with its Athletic Department, follows the chain of command listed at below. We ask that you observe the order of this line if you elect to pursue any concern you may have with regard to the Athletic Program.

- 1st Assistant Coach (if applicable)
- 2nd Head Coach
- 3rd High School Athletic Director or Assistant to the Director of Student Activities
- 4th Building Principal
- 5th Superintendent
- 6th Board of Education

We hope that the information provided in this "Communication Guide" will help you and your child to have a rewarding athletic experience.

Hazing:

- 1) **Hazing:** Students shall not threaten, act or participate in any act that injures, degrades, disgraces or tends to injure, degrade or disgrace any student or school employee. Nor shall a student harass any other person. (See Student Handbook for further information)
- 2) The _____ School District forbids hazing and all other activities that interfere with the personal liberty of an individual. The ___SD defines hazing as any action taken or situation created, whether on or off ___SD premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, or admission to, or as a condition for continued membership in, a group, team, club, or other organization. Any instance of hazing should be reported to the Director of Athletics at your school.
- 3) Ex. 2 Students shall not plan, encourage, or participate in any form of hazing. Hazing is defined as doing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to do any act of initiation into any organization that creates a risk of mental or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibition contained in this policy. Violation may lead to suspension, recommendation for expulsion, and/or legal action as contained in ORC 2307.44

Transportation:

It is the responsibility of the _____ School District to provide transportation to and from all away athletic contests. In the event appropriate school transportation is not desired or not necessary, private automobiles may be driven by school personnel **providing they have fulfilled all State of Ohio requirements**. Under no circumstances will student athletes be permitted to drive to away contests. In special cases, it may be necessary for a student to travel to or from away contests with his/her parent. This may be done only if a direct request has been made by a parent to the supervising coach of the sport and a Transportation Release Form (see Appendix A) has been filled out and approved by a Building Administrator. This form must be submitted to the supervising coach prior to the away contest.

For off-site home contests, students may drive their own vehicle. This may be done only if a direct request has been made by a parent to the supervising coach of the sport and a Transportation Release Form (see Appendix A) has been filled out and approved by a Building Administrator. Under no circumstances will student athletes be permitted to drive other student athletes.

Athletic teams using school buses will adhere to the following regulations:

Only participants, managers, statisticians, coaches and cheerleaders may ride a team bus. All others must have permission by the Building Athletic Director or the Building Principal.

1. The aisle must be clear at all times and equipment should not exceed the height of the seats.
2. All student athletes riding the bus must remain in their seats while the bus is moving.
3. The bus must be clean at the end of the trip. Weather conditions will be considered.
4. No horseplay will be permitted.
5. No eating or drinking will be permitted on the bus.
6. Nothing is to be thrown out the windows or extended out the windows such as arms, legs, etc.
7. All students shall submit to the authority of the driver and conduct themselves in a courteous manner.
8. No eating or drinking will be permitted on the bus.
9. Nothing is to be thrown out the windows or extended out the windows such as arms, legs, etc.
10. All students shall submit to the authority of the driver and conduct themselves in a courteous manner.
11. The coaches on the bus are responsible for their teams at all times. Any problems must be reported to the High School Athletic Director the following school day. (see Appendix A - Incident Report Form)
12. Attendance must be taken before departure from each event.

Spectator Behavior:

1. The _____ Schools has a zero tolerance policy for unruly behavior at athletic events.
2. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who threatens violence against a coach, player or fellow spectator, will be removed from the event. The offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.
3. The _____ Schools has a zero tolerance policy for the use of alcohol and/or drugs at athletic events.
4. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who uses drugs or alcohol at an athletic event, will be removed from the event. The offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.
5. The _____ Schools has a zero tolerance policy for the verbal abusive of coaches, players and officials at athletic events.
6. Any spectator, regardless of any affiliation with the school, who verbally abuses a coach, player or official, will be removed from the event. The offending spectator will not be allowed to attend the next home game. The offending spectator may return after they have sat out one event (from the same sport/team). If another violation occurs, then the offending spectator will be banned from all athletic events for the remainder of the school year.

Vacation Policy:

Vacations during an athlete's season are discouraged! However, if a vacation is unavoidable:

1. Contact head coach prior to the vacation;
2. An athlete must practice one day for each practice or contest day missed prior to resuming competition (contest day will count as a practice day); and
3. Be willing to assume the consequences related to your status as a starter, 2nd string, 3rd string, etc.

Attendance Policy:

1) Half Day Rule: A student athlete must arrive to school no later than 11:00 am and must be in attendance for the remainder of the day in order to be eligible to participate in an athletic practice or contest scheduled that same day. Under certain circumstances this rule may be waived by the High School Athletic Director or Assistant to the Director of Student Activities.

2) Any athlete who has an unexcused absence on the day of, or the day preceding, an athletic contest or practice, or any part thereof, will require written permission for participation from the athletic director or principal. An unexcused absence may result in the denial of participation.

3) It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students participating in athletic, extracurricular or co-curricular activities must attend at least one-half day of school (in by 11:10 am) to participate in the event that day or evening. Participation includes all practices, games, events, performances, etc. The principal or designee will have the sole authority to grant exceptions to this rule.

Dual Participation:

A student may participate in two sports at the high school level (i.e., cross country and golf) during the same season if both coaches (i.e., cross country and golf) agree, and the administration approves, based on whether or not dual participation will result in conflict in the requirements of the two sports. The student-athlete must declare one sport as their primary sport and attend all functions of this sport. The student-athlete may participate in their second sport as long as it does not conflict with their primary sport. Middle school students are not permitted to participate in two sports during the same season.