

Guidelines For Parent-Coach Communication

Interscholastic athletics are a compelling part of a high school's educational program. Due to the high profile nature of competitive athletics, the coaches, student-athletes, and parents/guardians often have an emotional investment that can turn what should be a positive experience into a negative one when misunderstandings occur. These guidelines have been created to clarify the expectations for communication between coach, parent, and student-athletes at Fairfield Prep. It also outlines a complaint process, if a problem develops.

The goal of our athletic programs is to develop within the student-athlete qualities of leadership, initiative, and good judgment. Our programs promote the physical, moral, and social development of our student-athletes so that they may be able to effectively perform in competition and lead under stress. The competitive goal of our athletic program is to consistently perform as well as possible against a variety of opponents. Consequently, Prep will always attempt to field the most effective combination of team members to achieve this goal.

Team membership and playing time are not guaranteed, regardless of grade level or previous team membership. The decision of who makes a team, who plays at what position, and who is given the most playing time **is within the sole and absolute discretion of the coaching staff.** **These decisions will not be reviewed by the administration or discussed with parents.**

The primary goal of sub-varsity programs is to identify, develop, and prepare qualified athletes for possible future varsity play. At times, younger players develop at a faster rate than their more experienced counterparts. Consequently, it is within the sole and absolute discretion of the coaching staff to determine whether a younger player starts on a varsity team and a more experienced player has either less playing time or is cut from the team.

Please realize that Prep draws from over 50 towns throughout Connecticut. Star players within a town or a particular travel team may not be able to compete when compared to others within the highly diverse applicant pool at Fairfield Prep. While being cut from a team, especially if an athlete had played on the team in the past, is always difficult and traumatic, it is part of the learning process. Being able to accept limitations and disappointments is an important part of maturing. Furthermore, Fairfield Prep offers a wide array of options for interscholastic competition. A student who does not make the team in one sport may very well make the team in another sport and thrive in that alternate arena.

A. Communication a Parent/Guardian Should Expect from a Coach if requested

1. The coach's background and vision for all levels of the program
2. Expectations and requirements for student-athletes on team (attendance, grades, dress, conduct, etc.)
3. Procedures to be followed in case of injury during practice or contest in conjunction with our athletic trainer
4. Team rules and disciplinary consequences for violations

B. Communication a Coach Expects from a Parent/Guardian if needed

1. Notification that the student-athlete is ill or injured
2. Advance notice if the student-athlete will miss practice or a contest
3. Clarifying questions about team procedures and time commitments
4. Any concerns are first addressed directly to the head coach only, not other parties

It is **NOT** appropriate to engage in a discussion about roster selection, starting lineup, playing time, captains, other student-athletes and team strategy/play calling. **The administration, including the Athletic Director, Principal and President will NEVER discuss or comment on the selection of the team.** Team selections are solely left up to the coaching staffs. Also, the coach will **NEVER** discuss student athletes with anyone other than the parent/guardian of the student-athlete involved. It is extremely difficult to accept that your son is not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals; they make decisions based on what they believe to be in the best interest of Fairfield Prep, the team and your son.

Even when the above communication expectations are met by all parties, concerns may become complaints. Should that happen, please address your complaint according to the process below:

COMPLAINT PROTOCOL

1. The student-athlete discusses his concern directly with the coach(es) - **If Not Resolved**
2. The parent contacts the coach to discuss the concern - **If Not Resolved**

3. The parent, coach **AND** student-athlete are required to meet personally - **If Not Resolved**
4. The parent **AND** student-athlete puts the concern in writing, both sign it, and contacts the Athletic Director - **If Not Resolved**
5. The Athletic Director will present the concern to the coach and recommend possible solutions - **If Not Resolved**
6. The Athletic Director will meet with the parent, student, **AND** coach - **If Not Resolved**
7. The Athletic Director will refer the matter to the Administration

**PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COACH WITH COMPLAINTS
IMMEDIATELY BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER A GAME**

Working together in a constructive and reasoned manner, the most significant adults in a student-athlete's life - his parent/guardian(s) and coach(es) - can make high school sports a great experience!