

The logo for IDARUK ATHLETICS features the word "IDARUK" in a large, bold, dark green font with a white outline, set against a dark green background. Below it, the word "ATHLETICS" is written in a smaller, dark green, sans-serif font.

IDARUK
ATHLETICS

Policies and Procedures Guidebook

Introduction

The Park School after-school athletic program is broken into two distinct yet connected components. The first piece is an introductory, intramural program for fourth grade students which takes place two afternoons a week. The second part is an interscholastic, competitive program for fifth through eighth graders which meets four times per week. Students are not required to participate in either of these programs, but once they choose to do so, they are expected to meet the requisite commitments. This handbook is designed to help students and parents become more familiar with Park's Athletics Department and program.

Philosophy

Although the Lower and Upper Division programs differ in both scope and intensity, we feel they are age appropriate and fit well within the mission of The Park School. Park's goal for "educational athletics" is to offer an inclusive program where students learn about the value of being part of a team and how they, as individuals, can work hard to make that team better. The athletic program strives to instill a strong sense of personal responsibility, resilience, respect, and gratitude in all of our students. Although our coaches care about winning, we are more interested in the development of our athletes and helping them learn to be good people than the result of individual contests. Park enjoys many wonderful rivalries and participates in competitive tournaments and games so that our athletes experience healthy competition. Our strongest emphasis is placed on sportsmanship and all that it encompasses. Respect for one's school, teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and spectators is most important in enjoying athletics and understanding its value.

Athletic Offerings

Grade 4

Fall

Soccer
Field Hockey

Winter

Basketball
Wrestling

Spring

Lacrosse
Softball

Grades 5 – 8

Fall

Soccer
Field Hockey
Cross Country
Flag Football
Volleyball

Winter

Basketball
Ice Hockey
Wrestling
Yoga/Dance

Spring

Lacrosse
Track and Field
Softball

Health, Safety and Medical Information

Each fall, all Park School students must complete and return the School's health and emergency contact form as well as provide a physical form signed by a physician. Students will not be allowed to participate in after-school sports contests until these documents are submitted. The doctor's physical form must be completed within one year of the participating season's start. If the physical form expires during the season, the student will become ineligible to play in games until a new physical form is turned in to the School's Health Office. The Park School employs an athletic trainer from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. when athletes are in season. The Athletic Trainer is the first responder for all injuries and emergencies involving athletes and will contact parents directly whenever necessary. If an athlete is injured he/she should see the Athletic Trainer immediately. The Athletic Trainer, in conjunction with a student's doctor (if seen) will decide when the athlete can return to play. **When an athlete sees a physician due to an injury (whether it occurred at school or not) that physician must provide a return-to-play protocol to the Athletic Trainer. Without this doctor's note, the athlete will not be allowed back to participate in Park School athletic practices or games.** All of Park's coaches are trained in CPR and First Aid and are also able to administer initial first aid care in the event of an accident or injury.

An injured athlete is expected to attend all team functions to the best of their ability. It is our contention that one can still learn from the sidelines. If a student is unable to participate in their daily class schedule (including physical education) then it is assumed that they are unable to participate in after-school athletics.

Students in Grades 6 and 8 will take the ImPACT Concussion Baseline test before the fall season begins. Parents/guardians who prefer their students NOT take the test should notify the Director of Athletics.

Team Placement

Students new to after-school activities can choose to experience a few days "trial period" to evaluate different sport options. This is more common for our youngest and new students. A final decision on participation in the activity must be made before team placements are finalized.

At the start of each sports season, as necessary, there will be days set aside for the evaluation and placement of athletes on specific teams. Whenever possible, we build teams for fifth and/or sixth graders only. Individual decisions for athletes in Grades 5-8 are made based on age, athletic ability, sport specific experience, and physical and emotional readiness. The intent is to allow athletes to develop similarly, participate confidently, and earn meaningful playing time. At the end of the evaluation process, coaches will meet privately with each individual athlete for an evaluation and subsequent team assignment. **Once these decisions are made, athletes are expected to honor their commitment to their assigned team and are not allowed to change sports or activities.**

Attendance and Playing Time

The athletics program strives to teach personal responsibility. Learning to uphold one's commitments is paramount to our program. Attendance at all practices, games, meetings, and weekend tournaments is required. A written note or email from a parent prior to the event is necessary to excuse all athletes from these commitments. Sub-varsity athletes who attend practice regularly can expect equal playing time in games. Varsity athletes in good standing can expect some playing time in every game, but equal playing time is not guaranteed. Athletes with unexcused absences prior to a game should expect to forfeit playing time for each absence. **If an athlete accumulates three unexcused absences during the same season, a meeting with the parents and coaches will be scheduled to determine the athlete's future status on the team.**

When an athlete is excused from participating in Physical Education (PE) class due to injury or illness, it is assumed that they are also unable to participate in after-school sports. In these cases, we expect that the athlete will still attend the practice or game and observe from the sideline if physically able. Athletes who suffer a season ending injury should still consider themselves members of their teams, and coaches will help them to find meaningful ways to stay involved.

Park's Coaches

Whenever possible, Park's coaches are members of the School's full time faculty and staff. It is important for our coaches to know and understand both the School's philosophy and culture as well as its students. It is also important for students to see and know their teachers in environments other than the classroom. When a qualified faculty or staff person cannot be found to lead a team, the Director of Athletics and Head of School will hire an adult from outside the School community. Parents or guardians of current students will not be hired to coach Park teams unless they are also full-time members of the faculty or staff.

Student Responsibilities

Uniforms and equipment: Team uniforms and other equipment are issued to students at the beginning of each season. Athletes are then responsible for keeping them clean and in good condition. These uniforms and equipment must be returned as soon as possible after the team's final contest. Uniforms that are damaged during regular game play will be repaired or replaced by the School, but uniforms lost or damaged by other means are the athlete's responsibility. Uniforms are to be worn for interscholastic contests only and should not be worn for practices or physical education classes. **If an athlete does not have their complete uniform for a game, they cannot play.** This can be a challenge for middle school athletes and is one of the ways in which student athletes learn to be responsible for themselves and to be positive members of their team.

Behavior: Park School athletes are ambassadors for our school. Their behavior on buses, in locker rooms, and on the campuses of other schools should reflect that role. Students who do not represent themselves and their school appropriately will not be allowed to remain on a Park School team.

Player Contract: Athletes will be given a **player agreement** by their coach at the start of each season. This contract outlines expectations for both students and coaches. Athletes and their parents are expected to read the contract, sign and return it to the coach before the first game. Athletes who have not turned in a signed contract, are not eligible to play in games.

Locks and Locker Room

At the beginning of each year all students in Grades 5-8 will be assigned a lock and locker to keep their personal belongings safe. Coaches will teach the children how to use a combination lock but if students prefer to use their own lock from home they may do so. We require that the code to personal locks be shared with the PE Department. Students are expected to keep their belongings safely locked in their lockers. The gymnasiums and locker rooms are used by outside groups in the evenings all year long. Please remember that our locker rooms are not private spaces and the Athletics Department cannot be responsible for belongings that are not locked up properly

Facilities Information

Outside usage: The Park School athletics facilities are spaces used commonly with the Physical Education Department and include playing fields, gymnasiums, locker rooms, equipment, and storage closets. Park's playing fields can only be used by Brookline youth sports groups in the afternoons beginning at 4:45 p.m. These groups gain access to our fields by contacting the Director of Athletics on a first-come-first-served basis. Priority, though, is given to Park School parents or guardians who serve as coaches of these youth teams. The Upper North Field is not generally used by outside groups, as it is our field hockey field. We are concerned that overuse of this field will cause it to become dangerous for this sport. Use of other facilities including gymnasiums, the theater, and classrooms is managed by the Assistant Director of External Programs and in most cases will entail a rental fee and proof of insurance.

Practice Information

Grade 4 practices run from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m., two days per week. Girls play on Mondays and Thursdays. Boys play on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Upper Division practices run from 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. except on early dismissal days in the fall and spring. The winter season is more complicated due to court space and ice times; therefore the winter practice schedule is distributed at the beginning of the winter season. Practice times and game information are listed on the Park website. Please confirm this information often. Schedule changes do occur!

Away Game Information

Bus departure and return times are listed on the Park School website and families should confirm this information regularly. Directions to our competitor schools are also listed on the Park website.

After the game is completed, athletes will return to school on the team bus or go home with their parents or guardians. **Athletes who wish to depart from an away game with anyone other**

than their own parent or guardian must provide written permission from a parent or guardian prior to the bus's initial departure from Park. Without this written permission, students will be required to return on the bus. Students will not be released to Uber, Lyft or taxi drivers. Return times are listed on the Park website and coaches expect students to be collected soon after the bus returns to school. Coaches will remain with their athletes until they are collected. Students whose rides are repeatedly late may be prohibited from participating in away contests.

Practice/Game Cancellations and Snow Days

From time to time it is necessary to cancel athletics games and/or practices. In most cases this is due to inclement weather and/or unsafe playing conditions. On these occasions the Athletics Department staff will post the information on The Park School website and notify parents and guardians via email if possible. Unless instructed otherwise please assume that athletes will remain at school until 4:30 p.m. for a practice, team meeting, or study hall in lieu of the competition. When school is cancelled due to inclement weather, all practices and games are cancelled as well.

Behavioral Guidelines for Parents, Guardians, Athletes, and Coaches

We hope and expect that families will be involved with and supportive of their children's athletics endeavors. Should parents or guardians have any questions or concerns about how their children are experiencing the season, they should contact the coach for a meeting. Parents and guardians should not approach coaches during games to inquire about playing time or appropriate positions for their child and should not speak with others about the ability of participating athletes (either Park students or our opponents) or officials within earshot of other spectators. Like coaches and teachers, family members are role models for our young athletes and must be sensitive about the image they portray. Parents and guardians must refrain from coaching their children from the sidelines because it causes confusion, mixed messages, and frustration for players, coaches, and other parents.

Families can be most helpful by enabling their child to attend as many practices and games as possible. Honoring commitments is a valuable lesson we teach through athletics. Medical appointments and other potential conflicts should be scheduled on off days.

The New England Prep School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) provides valuable guidelines for athletes' proper conduct and sportsmanship, as well as guidelines for spectators. The Park School fully supports these guidelines:

Proper Conduct and Good Sportsmanship:

At the heart of this lie several terms that are often hard to define – yet no more important task confronts teachers and coaches than to set standards that are fair and honorable.

“Proper conduct” and “good sportsmanship” refer to such standards as these:

1. Treat other people as you know they should be treated, and as you know they would like to be treated.
2. Follow the rules of your game.
3. Treat officials and opponents with respect at all times.
4. Accept absolutely and without quarrel the final decision of any official.
5. Honor visiting teams and spectators as your guests, and treat them as such.
6. Behave as an honored guest when visiting another school.
7. Be gracious in victory and defeat; learn especially to take defeat well.
8. Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
9. Remember that your actions on and off the field reflect on you and your school.

Guidelines For Spectators:

Spectators – whether students, faculty, parents, guardians, alumni or friends – bear important responsibilities to the School for the atmosphere and conduct of games, whether home or away.

1. Spectators should watch games from those areas defined by each school as spectator areas. They must not run up and down the sidelines, call to players, coaches, or officials in an unsportsmanlike manner, go onto the field of play, or deface property. Any action that detracts from the ability of coaches, players, and officials to do their best is not acceptable.
2. Spectators who behave inappropriately will be asked to leave a Park School athletics event. Further, if the behavior continues, the athlete associated with this spectator may be removed from the program.
3. As spectators at Park competitions, members of the community serve as ambassadors for The Park School. The positive spirit and constructive partnership modeled by Park spectators should always be consistent with Park’s community values, and we are grateful to all for supporting our students in their hard work.