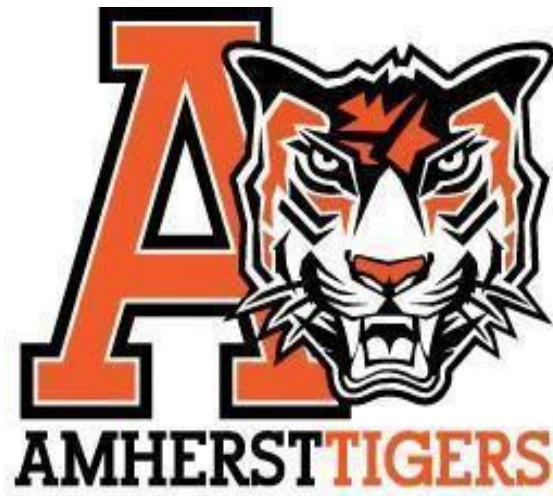


Amherst Athletics



Student Athlete & Parent Handbook

Dear Student Athletes and Parents,

Welcome to the Amherst Central School District Athletic Program. This information is presented to you because of your expressed desire to participate in interscholastic athletics. Your interest in this phase of your school program is gratifying. We believe that participation in athletics provides the opportunity for developing lifetime skills that will help students in becoming well-rounded individuals capable of making decisions and handling problems. These skills will enable you to lead a healthy and prosperous life.

The main goal for our Interscholastic Athletic program is to provide competitive experiences that are fun, successful, and prompt the individual growth within a safe and healthy environment. These experiences will become high school memories that will last a lifetime.

When your son/daughter chooses to participate in one of our programs, they have committed themselves to certain responsibilities and obligations. This handbook will acquaint you with the specific policies and rules necessary for a well-organized program of interscholastic athletics. Our program is governed by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and the Amherst Central School District Board of Education.

Amherst Central participates in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) under Section VI regionally and the Erie County Interscholastic Conference (ECIC) as its league affiliate.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Amherst Athletic Program or this handbook, please contact me at 362-3020.

Sincerely,

Robert Adams

Robert Adams
Director of Health, PE, & Athletics

RA/rr

AMHERST ATHLETICS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Amherst Central athletic programs in association with New York State Public High School Athletic Association is to foster the quest for excellence by creating an educational and competitive experience within an atmosphere of sportsmanship. Our program will develop individual and team potential by promoting high standards of competence, character, civility, and citizenship.

MODIFIED PROGRAM

This program is available to all students in the seventh and eighth grade. At this level, the focus is on participation, learning athletic skills, game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demand of the adolescent body and healthy competition.

Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the availability of:

1. Financial Resources
2. Qualified Coaches
3. Safe, suitable indoor and outdoor facilities

In certain modified sports, “cuts” are made to determine team rosters.

JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAM

This program is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive varsity level performers. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, team, and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play, in addition to social and emotional development. Junior varsity programs work towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and striving for victory. The outcome of the contest becomes a consideration at this level. The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful junior varsity team and player. With the goal of becoming a varsity player clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the junior varsity level. Although providing playing time for each of the members of the squad is a goal, there is no guarantee as to the amount of playing time.

VARSITY PROGRAM

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on a varsity team, as is the realization that a varsity sport requires a strong commitment. The components of the philosophy of the junior varsity program are further developed and enhanced at the varsity level. In the determination of the team roster, participation on the varsity team during the previous year does not guarantee a spot on the team the subsequent year. Those demonstrating the best level of skill and attitude will be selected. Although providing playing time for each of the members of the squad is a goal, there is no guarantee as to the amount of playing time.

NYSPHSAA/SECTION VI BYLAWS and ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

AGE AND GRADE

A student shall be eligible for interschool competition in grades 9,10,11,12 until his/her nineteenth birthday. If the age of nineteen years is reached on or after July 1, the student may continue to participate during that school year in all sports.

DURATION OF COMPETITION

A pupil shall be eligible for senior high school athletic competition in a sport during each of four consecutive seasons of such sport commencing with the pupil's entry into the ninth grade and prior to graduation, except as otherwise specified by the Commissioner's Regulations.

AMATEUR

A student who represents a school in an interscholastic sport shall be an amateur in that sport. An amateur is one who engages in athletic competition solely for the pleasure of the activity and for the physical, mental, and social benefits derived from participation. When competing in non-NYSPHSAA sponsored events, an athlete forfeits amateur status in a sport by:

1. Competing for money or other compensation (allowable entry fees, travel, meals, and lodging expenses may be accepted).
2. Receiving an award or prize of monetary value which has not been approved by this Association.
3. Capitalizing on athletic fame by receiving money or gifts of monetary value (scholarships to institutes of higher learning are specifically exempted).
4. Signing a professional playing contract in that sport.
5. Instructing, supervising, or officiating in any organized youth sports program, recreation, playground, or camp activities will not jeopardize amateur standing. Receiving compensation for officiating shall not affect amateur standing.
6. A student who violates the above rule may apply to the league or to the designated body within that section for reinstatement one year from the date of the latest violation.

PROFESSIONAL TRYOUTS

No tryouts for, or practice with, professional teams and their affiliates are approved except during the summer vacation. A student who participates in such a tryout is ineligible to represent the school in that sport.

BONA FIDE STUDENTS

A contestant must be a bona fide student of the high school represented and must be taking at least four subjects including Physical Education.

RECRUITMENT AND UNDUE INFLUENCE

Recruiting and Undue Influence is defined as the use of influence by any person connected directly or indirectly with a NYSPHSAA school to induce a student to transfer from one school or another, or to enter the ninth grade at a member school for athletic purposes - whether or not the school presently attended by the student is a member of the NYSPHSAA.

- A. The use of undue influence to secure a student for competitive purposes in a sport is prohibited. An infraction shall cause the student to forfeit eligibility in that sport for one year from the date of enrollment.
- B. Evidence of undue influence includes, but is not limited to, personal contact by coaches and sponsors in an attempt to persuade transfer, gifts of money, jobs, supplies, clothing, free transportation, admission to contests, invitation to attend practices and/or games, or free and/or reduced tuition.

TRANSFER

- A. A student in grades 9-12 who transfers, with a corresponding change in residence of his/her parents (or other persons with whom the student has resided for at least six months) shall become eligible after starting regular attendance in the second school. A residence change must involve a move from one school district to another public-school district for athletic eligibility the student must enroll in the public school district or in a private school within that district's boundaries of his/her parent's residency. For athletic eligibility, a residence is changed when one is abandoned by the immediate family and another residency is established through action and intent. Residency requires one's physical presence as an inhabitant and the intent to remain indefinitely. The Superintendent, or designee, will determine if the student has met district residency requirements.
- B. A student who transfers without a corresponding change in residence of his/her parents (or other persons with whom the student has resided for at least six months prior) is ineligible to participate at the varsity level in any interscholastic athletic contest in a particular sport for a period of one (1) year if as a 9-12 student participated in that sport during the one (1) year period immediately preceding his/her transfer. A student's period of ineligibility begins with the date of registration at the student's new school. (May 2020) NOTE: Students in grades 7-10, shall be eligible to participate at the sub-varsity level and practice at all levels, while students in grades 11- 12 shall be limited to practice (all levels) only. (July 2019). At no time during the one-year period of ineligibility at the varsity level should a student participate in a scrimmage or be an exhibition participant at the varsity level.

Students who transfer from any school to the public-school district of the residence of his/her parents (or other persons whom the student has resided for at least six months) or a private school within that district's boundaries shall receive a waiver from the Transfer Rule. Such a transfer without penalty will only be permitted once in a high school career. Schools must submit the required transfer form to the Section office. Athletes are not permitted to practice before the form has been submitted. Athletes are not permitted to compete without approval. NOTE: A student in

a foreign exchange program listed by CSJET has a one-year waiver of the Transfer Rule. If such a student elects to stay a second year he/she becomes a foreign student at the start of the school year with item (b) in effect.

Exemptions to (b): For athletic eligibility, a student must enroll in the public-school district or in a nonpublic school within that district's boundaries of his/her residency. Note: Multiple High School Districts- The policies/boundaries of the school district will be followed. If the district has an open enrollment policy, the interpretation to be used will be the same as used for students of K-8 school districts. When a student enrolls in 9th grade, this is the district (building) of their residence. Any subsequent transfer would be subject to the Transfer Rule.

1. The student reaches the age of majority and established residency in a district and can substantiate that they are independent and self-supporting.
2. If a private or parochial school ceases to operate a student may transfer to another private or parochial school of his/her choice. Otherwise, a student must enroll in the public-school district of his/her parents' residency.
3. A student who is a ward of the court or state and is placed in a district by court order. Guardianship does not fulfill this requirement.
4. A student from divorced or "legally" separated parents who moves into a new school district with one of the aforementioned parents. Such a transfer is allowed once every six months. The legal separation agreement must address custody, child support, spouses support and distribution of assets and be filed with the County Clerk or issued by a Judge.
5. A student who is declared homeless by the superintendent pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 100.2.
6. A student of a military employee who is transferred to an active military base may enroll in the non-public school closest to their residence and maintain eligibility if the student enrolls in a non-public school immediately following the change in residence.

NOTE: It is provided, however, that each school shall have the opportunity to petition the section involved to approve transfer without penalty based on an undue hardship for the student. Educational Waivers will not be considered as an undue hardship.

MIXED COMPETITION ON ATHLETIC TEAMS (NYSED)

NYSED Regulations- Mixed Competition

These guidelines are issued to assist schools in the implementation of Section 135.4(c)(7)(ii)(c) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education which govern interscholastic competition involving members of both sexes on a single school team. The purpose of the regulation is to preserve the health and safety of students while assuring that students of both sexes have the opportunity to participate successfully in inter school competition.

Any athlete that is interested in mixed competition shall contact the sport coach and athletic director at least 30 days prior to the start of the season to ensure proper protocol and documentation is conducted. For more information regarding the NYSED regulation (mixed competition) please visit our athletics website (link above).

NYSPHSAA SPORTSMANSHIP

Individual players who commit serious violations of their responsibilities as participants may be subject to the following penalties:

EJECTION

- A. Player-** Any player ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct, including taunting or a flagrant foul, is ineligible to play in that sport until after the next previously scheduled contest. Disqualifications will carry over to the next season of participation. The player **may not** attend the game in which he or she is suspended from.
- B. Coach-** Any coach ejected from a contest by a certified official for unsportsmanlike conduct, including taunting, is ineligible to coach in that sport until after the next previously scheduled contest.

EXTRACURRICULAR POLICIES AND RULES

Complete Extracurricular Policies and Rules

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR AMHERST STUDENTS

All students who participate in an extracurricular activity will have their academic progress monitored every five weeks during the time of participation. Any student who is failing or received an incomplete in one or more subjects at the time of academic review will be subject to the academic eligibility policy and the following process will be implemented.

1. Students failing or receiving an incomplete in one subject:

Students with one failure and/or incomplete in one subject are allowed to participate and/or compete as long as they are receiving remediation in the failing or incomplete subject for the subsequent five weeks.

The student is placed on academic probation, and will be monitored by the advisors and administration for the remainder of his/her participation in the activity.

2. Students failing and/or receiving incomplete in two or more subjects:

Students with two or more failures or incompletes will be placed on academic suspension. This suspension allows the students to attend all practices/meetings, but not participate in outside school events or interscholastic competitions for a minimum of a two week probation period. The student will be required to go to remediation in each failing subject for the subsequent five weeks.

- A. The advisor/coach will report to the school administration those students who are failing and/or receive an incomplete in two or more subjects. Parents will be notified in writing through the Aspen email portal by the administration.
- B. The advisor/coach and or administration will meet with the student and notify him/her verbally that a two week suspension period will be imposed. At the end of the two weeks, an academic review will be held by the administration to verify that required remediation has been completed. For this to occur, the student must raise the quality of his/her work to a passing average (65%) or better in each subject identified as deficient. The student will be required to continue remediation in each subject for the subsequent five weeks, and administration will continue to monitor on a weekly basis.
- C. Students failing to rectify Academic Suspension for class failure will be eligible to fulfill necessary requirements during Summer School. Failure to rectify suspension requirements will result in wraparound consequences related to the suspension, per building level policies.

ATHLETIC PLACEMENT PROCESS (APP)

ACSD Athletic Placement Process

Please be aware that the Amherst Central School District participates in the Athletic Placement Process offered by New York State designed to place exceptional athletes at an appropriate level. This program allows 7th and 8th grade students who excel in a sport specific skill, meet physical fitness requirements and are approved by the middle school principal have an opportunity to try out for a junior varsity or varsity team. This program is not designed to fill empty slots on a team or take the place of a modified team that does not exist. Please note the Director of Athletics, MS & HS Building Principals and sport specific Coach will make a final determination on what is the best placement for the individual student. Please refer to the hyperlink above or our school website for more information regarding the athletic placement process.

REGULATIONS AND MANDATES FOR AMHERST CENTRAL SCHOOLS

PARENT/SPECTATOR CODE OF BEHAVIOR/ETHICS

It is the responsibility of the parent/spectator to:

1. Keep cheering positive. There should be no profanity or degrading language/gestures.
2. Avoid actions that might offend visiting teams or individual players.
3. Show appreciation of good play by both teams.
4. Learn the rules of the game in order to be a better-informed spectator.
5. Treat all visiting teams in a manner in which you would expect to be treated.
6. Accept the judgment of coaches and officials.
7. Encourage other spectators to participate in the spirit of good sportsmanship.
8. Avoid the use, abuse and resulting negative influence of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS OR RULES

Coaches may establish team and individual expectations and rules for team members. These will be communicated in writing to the students at the beginning of the season.

JEWELRY RULE

No jewelry which includes body piercing objects, shall be worn in any sport. Any piece of jewelry that is visible at the start of a contest, is in violation of the NYSPHSAA Jewelry Rule. Religious medals must be taped to the body under the uniform. Medical medals must be taped to the body so they are visible. Soft, pliable barrettes are permissible.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION PLAN

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to our children. As parents, when your son/daughter becomes involved in athletics, please understand what expectations are placed on him/her. This begins with clear lines of communication.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach:

1. Expectations the coach has for your son/daughter as well as for the team
2. Locations and times of practices and contests
3. Team requirements (i.e. practices, contests, equipment, and conditioning)
4. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

Communication coaches expect from parents:

1. Any and all concerns are expressed directly to the head coach
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance

High school athletics will involve some of your child's best memories. It is also important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times a discussion directly with the head coach should take place.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. Ways to help your child improve
2. Concerns about your child's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Other student-athletes

It is very difficult to accept your child's playing time in some instances. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. As you have

seen above, certain things are appropriate to discuss with your child's coaches while others are left to the discretion of the coaches.

If there is a concern to discuss with a coach, the following is the procedure that must be complied with:

1. The player is to speak with the coach directly and discuss his/her concern. Many times the matter can be taken care of at that time.
2. The parent(s) and player are to speak with the coach directly and discuss their concern. The discussion however should not be held during a practice time or before/after a contest. A meeting will have to be scheduled at both party's convenience.
3. The parent(s) and player are to speak with the head coach and discuss their concern.
4. If the matter at hand is not resolved after completing the procedures above, the parent(s) and/or the player may request a meeting with the athletic director and coach. However, it should be understood that under no circumstances will the athletic director ever mandate playing time for a player.

Expectations of Parent/Guardian:

1. Support your student athlete's effort toward success and maintain the importance of a strong work ethic academically and athletically.
2. Work to promote a positive environment that is to benefit your student athlete.
3. Become familiar with and review with your child all team and district athletic policies.
4. Communicate any concerns in a timely manner, according to district protocol.
5. Treat all coaching personnel, officials, and opposing teams with courtesy and respect and insist that your child does the same.
6. Support the program by being an active parent and positive role model for all student athletes.

Important aspects to keep in mind:

1. Participation in athletics is a privilege. Any actions/behavior inside or outside of school that is detrimental to the team, the player themselves, a coach, or the school may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
2. Academics are the number one priority. Students are held to strict academic standards at ACSD; students may be suspended from participation on a team for academic reasons.

EQUIPMENT, FACILITY AND PERSONAL PROPERTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Athletes are responsible for all equipment issued to them. They should not expect managers, coaches or others to assume that obligation.

1. Lost, stolen, or misused equipment will be charged to the individual responsible for it and he/she will be required to make restitution. The athlete will be charged for equipment at replacement value.
2. Team members are not expected to willfully or carelessly damage equipment, facilities or property whether at home or away on trips.
3. Any player found to be in possession of unauthorized equipment, Amherst's or others will be suspended from the squad. He/she will not be permitted to retain the articles and in the case of

other school's property, he/she shall return it and make the appropriate apology. (Trading of school equipment is prohibited.)

UNIFORM COLLECTION

It is the athlete's responsibility to return his/her uniform to the coach. Any athlete leaving a team during the season must turn in his/her uniform at that time. Non-compliance with repeated requests (by coaches) to return uniform parts will be treated as insubordination with the appropriate consequences. The cost to replace single uniforms (which must be purchased new, even if the lost one is used) may be as much as double the cost of uniforms when the District purchases them in a bulk order. Fees paid for lost/stolen uniforms are used to replace the missing uniform. Checks should be made out to the Amherst Central School District and submitted to the high school athletic office.

Students who fail to return a school-issued uniform will not receive a uniform from another sport until that uniform is returned or payment has been settled.

TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS

1. Only coaches, squad members, managers, statisticians and student associates may ride on the school bus to and from away contests.
2. All squad members must be transported on District vehicles to and from away contests. Only parental requests, in the event of extenuating circumstances, will be honored for any deviation of this policy. Only parents can pick up athletes. Notes are not adequate.
3. It is the responsibility of the coach to see to it that athletes do not eat or drink on the bus, remain seated and orderly on the bus and that they do not reach or yell out the windows.
4. Athletes are **not permitted** to drive to away contests.

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION LAW

When the district has provided transportation to students enrolled in such district to a school sponsored field trip, extracurricular activity or any other similar event, it shall provide transportation back to either the point of departure or to the appropriate school in the district, unless the parent or legal guardian of a student participating in such event has provided the school district with written notice, consistent with district policy, authorizing an alternative form of return transportation for such student or unless intervening circumstances make transportation of a student back to the point of departure or to the appropriate school in the district impractical, a representative of the school district shall remain with the student until such student's parent or legal guardian has been (a) contacted and informed of the intervening circumstances which make such transportation impractical and (b) such student has been delivered to his or her parents or legal guardian.

ATHLETICS PHYSICALS/HEALTH EXAMINATIONS

Athletes are required to have a complete physical examination either by their personal physician or the school practitioner and the physical record must be on file with the school health office, prior to the start of the season. A physical is valid for one year from the date it was signed by the physician, up to the last day of the month.

HEALTH HISTORY SPORTS PARTICIPATION FORM

Athletes who have not received a valid physical within 30 days of the start of a specific sport season are required to submit a Health History Sports Participation Form to the Health Office before the start of the next sport season, not more than 30 days before the start of the sport. These forms will be given out prior to each season by the athletic office and/or health office. The forms are also located on our athletic website.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INJURIES AND FILING CLAIMS

1. An athlete must report an injury to the coach or athletic trainer immediately.
2. An accident report must be filed by the coach and returned to the school nurse.
3. The Board of Education maintains a student accident insurance policy. The school nurse will provide the necessary insurance forms and the accident report from the coach.
4. It is the responsibility of the injured students' parents or guardian to complete and file the claim within 90 days of the accident and send it to the specified school insurance company. Students are covered by school insurance only after their own medical insurance has been used. For further transactions a parent or guardian may contact the Amherst Central School District office at (716) 362-3000.
5. Before an athlete can return to their sport, they must be cleared, in writing, by their attending physician. A written release from your physician must be given to the School Nurse, Athletic Trainer, and your Head Coach.

ACCIDENTS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Procedures shall be established and maintained by the Superintendent for the handling of student injuries and medical emergencies that occur on school property and during school activities.

STUDENT EMERGENCY TREATMENT

All staff members of the School District are responsible to obtain first aid care of students who are injured or become ill while under school supervision. In most instances first aid should be rendered, and then the parent should be contacted to come to school and transport the student to the family physician. Beyond first aid, the medical care of the student is the parent's responsibility. However, the student's welfare is always the primary concern, and it is the responsibility of school personnel to exercise good judgement and care under all circumstances.

The Board of Education encourages all staff members to become qualified to give emergency treatment through instruction in first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

TRANSPORTING AN ILL OR INJURED STUDENT

In the event of an illness or injury to a student, an ambulance may be called if warranted. This solution will be used after other alternatives, including parent/guardian contact, have been made.

INSURANCE

The Board of Education shall approve provisions for all students to be covered by group insurance. Such student accident insurance policies are to be a co-insurance with family coverage(s) as primary. Education Law Sections 1604(7-a,b) and 1709(8-a,b).

NCAA INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY CENTER

[NCAA Eligibility Center](#)

Student-athletes must register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Center to be eligible to play NCAA Division I or Division II sports in college. (Athletes playing in the NCAA Division III do not have to register.)

The NCAA Eligibility Center is the organization that determines whether prospective college athletes are eligible to play sports at NCAA Division I or Division II institutions. It does this by reviewing the student-athlete's academic record, SAT or ACT scores, and amateur status to ensure conformity with NCAA rules.

The NCAA recommends that student athletes register with the clearinghouse at the beginning of their junior year in high school, but many students register after their junior year. There is no registration deadline, but students must be cleared by the clearinghouse before they receive athletic scholarships or compete at a Division I or Division II institution.

SCHOLAR ATHLETE PROGRAM

The NYSPHSAA, Inc. believes that the athletic participation of students enhances their academic performances. To support this belief, the Scholar/Athlete Team Award Program was begun in 1991. Varsity teams who earn a 90.0% or higher average during their sport season qualify for the NYSPHSAA award.

Additionally, WNY recognizes senior student athletes who demonstrate excellence in academics and athletics. Each season, Amherst coaches submit names of senior student-athletes to be recognized in the Buffalo News as senior scholar-athlete winners and honorable mention.

COACH DIRECTORY/CONTACT INFORMATION

[Fall Season Coach Directory](#)

[Winter Season Coach Directory](#)

[Spring Season Coach Directory](#)

Our coaching staff directory and contact information is updated regularly and can be found on our athletics website at the following links above.