

Middle Country Interscholastic Athletics

MISSION STATEMENT

The Middle Country Athletic Department believes that interscholastic athletic competition provides opportunities for students to grow physically and intellectually through their experiences in self-discipline and their contributions to a team effort.

Since the Interscholastic Athletic Program is the philosophical extension of the physical education program, the goals and objectives of interscholastic athletics should be supportive of and consistent with the goals and objectives of the total educational program.

When conducted properly, athletics can positively contribute to intellectual, physical, social and emotional development; however, the realization of these educational goals does not automatically occur. These values are attained when the athletic program is viewed as a means to an end rather than an end itself.

Although the explicit goal of athletic competition is to win following the rules, it is by no means the only measure of success. The real challenge is guiding the individual and team to reach its full potential, which is the true measure of achievement. The competitive athletic environment is one that demands respect for full effort, and applause for those who rise to the challenge and accept the risk of defeat. Those who are successful in life are those who the athletic field does not always reward with a victory. However, if one strives toward reaching full potential, with a passion and perseverance, personal victories are the rewards that last a lifetime.

Our programs are governed by the rules, regulations and procedures prescribed by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Section XI and the Middle County School District.

Interscholastic Athletic Program

Objectives:

- 1. To develop and maintain the highest level of sportsmanship.**
- 2. To encourage and develop respect for fellow athletes whether they are teammates, members of other Middle Country teams, or members of opposing teams.**
- 3. To assure that athletic participation does not interfere with academic success but supports it.**
- 4. To develop educated, healthy, and respectful attitudes toward individual habits, appearance on and off the field, and citizenship in and out of school.**
- 5. To encourage competition for tangible rewards, the development of positive attitudes that make athletic competition valuable and worthwhile, and the development of character building through work ethic.**

6. To orient all athletic staff members to abide by the rules, regulations, and officials' decisions that govern each sport.
7. To maintain the highest standard of ethics, recognizing each participant as an individual who will conduct him/herself in a manner befitting his/her responsibilities, and develop rapport with the broader school community that will improve the total educational program.

Coaching Responsibilities:

1. The coach must be aware that he/she serves as a model in the education of the student-athlete and, therefore, shall never place the value of winning above the value of character building.
2. The coach must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the teaching profession.
3. In all personal contact with the student-athletes, parents, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the media and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
4. The coach shall support and enforce school rules for the prevention of drug (including performance enhancing drugs), alcohol and tobacco use and abuse, and under no circumstances shall he/she allow or condone the use of the substances.
5. The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his/her program in harmony with the total school program.
6. Coaches shall actively use their influence to promote sportsmanship by working closely with parents, athletes, administrators and the community.

Varsity Program Philosophy

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sports program. Usually, seniors and juniors comprise the majority of the roster. At the varsity coach's discretion, sophomores and freshmen may be included on the team providing that evidence of advanced levels of physical development, athletic skill and appropriate socio-emotional development are demonstrated. It is possible but rare for a modified level student to be included on a varsity roster. The New York State Selection Classification occurs more frequently in sports commonly classified as "individual" (track, golf, tennis, etc.).

Squad size at the varsity level is limited. The number of participants on any given team is a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest. It is vital that each team member has a role and is informed of its importance. The number of roster positions is relative to the student's acceptance of their roles in pursuit of team goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed.

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 six-day-a-week commitment. This commitment is often extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons.

Depending on the sport, contests and practices are scheduled during vacation, on Sunday, and in some cases holidays. The dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity program must be taken seriously by all student-athletes.

The varsity coach is the leader of that sports program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. The communication among the modified, junior varsity and varsity programs is the responsibility of the varsity coach. Preparing to win, striving for victory in each contest and working to reach the group's and individual's maximum potential are worthy goals of a varsity level team

Junior Varsity Program Philosophy

The junior varsity level is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive varsity level athletes. Although team membership varies according to the structure of each program, 9th and 10th grade students occupy the majority of roster positions. In certain situations 11th graders are included on a junior varsity roster. Also, modified students who have satisfied all selective classification criteria may participate at the JV level.

At this level, athletes are expected to have 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-emotional development. Junior varsity programs work toward achieving a balance between continued team and player development and striving for victory.

The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful junior varsity team and player. For all team members, meaningful contest participation will exist over the course of a season, however, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for the six-day-a week commitment that is expected at the varsity level. While contests and practices are rarely held on holidays and Sundays, practice sessions are sometimes scheduled during school vacations and commitment is expected at the junior varsity level.

Modified Program Philosophy

This program is available to all students in the seventh and eighth grades. Sports activities offered are determined by the existence of leagues, student interest, and the relationship to the high school program. At this level, the focus is on learning athletic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, socio-emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition.

At the middle school level, it is our goal to provide a well-planned and well-balanced program of interscholastic athletics for as many students as possible.

Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the student interest and the availability of 1) financial resources, 2) qualified coaches, 3) suitable indoor or outdoor facilities and 4) a safe environment.

In order for the desired development of the adolescent athlete and team to occur, practice sessions are vital. The New York State Public High School Athletic Association publishes regulations by which practice sessions are governed. Vacation/recess practices are not regularly scheduled at the modified level. However, on rare occasions practices may be scheduled to insure that students are adequately prepared to participate. Opportunities for meaningful contest participation within the game format will exist over the course of a season for student athletes that meet their school and team responsibilities. Coaches will determine playing time based on a variety of circumstances including abilities, game situations, and practice performance.

It is possible, but rare for a modified level student to be included on a high school (Junior Varsity, or Varsity) roster. Criteria that must be met in order to play at an advanced level include parental approval, medical approval, appropriate developmental rating, passing athletic performance test scores, the coach's skill evaluation, and advanced degree of social-emotional maturity as outlined by the New York State Education Department Selection/ Classification Policy. Only the Varsity coach of a particular sport will initiate this process.

Athletic Participation Requirements

Students must be fully registered and taking at least four subjects and physical education to meet the participation requirements for the Interscholastic Athletic Program.

Each student must follow, adhere to and abide by the regulations set forth by the Middle Country High School Extra-Curricular Eligibility/Intervention Policy. (Attachment A)

Sports Physicals

The school district physician conducts physical examinations for sports in August for the following school year's athletic teams and prior to the start of each athletic season. Students are also permitted to receive his or her physical by their own physician provided that the physician completes the school district's athletic physical form.

Coach's Meeting(s)

Student-Athletes: Prior to the start of each season, coaches will meet with their athletes to distribute important information that must be completed prior to the first practice session. These forms are: The Emergency Contact Card (vital information of contact numbers for coaches), and a Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Permission Form (which allows a student to participate in athletics with the approval of parent/guardian).

Parent/Guardians: Prior to the start of each season it recommended that coaches hold an informational meeting for parents/guardians. At this meeting the respective coach will communicate his/her goals, expectations of student-athletes, team rules, practice/game schedules, etc.

Practice Sessions

Student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practice sessions and games conducted by the Middle Country Athletic Department unless excused by the coach in concert with the parent. The importance of practice is clearly stated in the Philosophy portion of this handbook. If you must miss a scheduled practice, scrimmage or game, it is your responsibility to give prior notice to your coach, in writing if possible dated and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Unexcused or illegal absences may result in exclusion from participation in the next game.

Try- outs and Selection of Teams

As an athletic department we try to keep as many students on our Varsity and Junior Varsity teams as possible. Size of team is determined by safety factors, particularly the number of athletes a coach can adequately supervise. Additionally, team numbers are determined by the number of athletes who can contribute in a positive way. Unfortunately some teams have to make "selections" or "cuts". These decisions are among the most difficult decisions a coach must make. When athletes are evaluated during the tryout period coaches are asked to utilize as many "objective factors" as possible. These factors differ from sport to sport. Some subjective elements, such as effort and attitude, may also come into play in the decision-making process.

Family Vacations

When parents and student athletes choose to take family vacations during sport seasons it must be understood that the time missed by the student-athlete can affect team chemistry and physical conditioning. At the varsity and junior varsity level family vacations will impact the student's ability to make the team and or playing time. Coaches will make every effort to inform parents and student-athletes of the season schedule as far in advance as possible. Each coach has his or her own team procedure on this that must be followed.

Responsibility for Uniforms and Equipment

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach at the end of the season. Students who lose equipment or uniforms will be billed for replacement pieces. Be aware that a replacement jersey or sweat top can be very costly because of the special order that must be placed. Students who have not returned school issued equipment or uniforms will not be given another in the next season until the previous uniform and/or compensation has been received.

Returning to Practice Following an Injury

Students must report every injury and illness to their parent(s)/guardian(s) and coach. If they receive medical attention for any injury or illness, they may not return to practice, scrimmage or compete in any contest until they receive a written medical release from a doctor or health care facility where they were treated. The note must include the date of the injury/illness, a diagnosis, any restrictions and a date to return to participation. The note must be verified through the nurse's office and passed along to the coach.

Transportation

Student – athletes will be transported to and from school sponsored activities by school-authorized vehicles only. A parent/guardian may request in writing, to drive their son/daughter from an event due to a special circumstance. Under no circumstance will an athlete be permitted to travel home from an away contest with another parent. All requests must be approved by the athletic director and made at least one day prior to the scheduled activity.

Sportsmanship Coaches-Student/Athletes-Fans-Parents

Every contest played in Suffolk County is rated by coaches and officials for sportsmanship. Ratings are collected after each game and sent to Section XI. Results are then tabulated for each team relative to other teams in their league. Additionally, each school gets a post-season general rating. Coaches, student-athletes, and parents must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their positive actions can relate directly to the success of their teams.

Visiting team members, students, and adult spectators are guests to be accorded all the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered, and well-intentioned host would normally give. The visitors, in turn, are to act as invited guests, using the home school's facilities with care by respecting the rules and customs of the home school.

Parent/Coach Communication

Parent/Coach Communication

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult work. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefits to athletes. As parents, when children become involved in the program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach regarding your child's program.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach

- Philosophy of the coach
- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all players on the squad.
- Locations and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements, team rules, special equipment, off season programs
- Procedure, should your child be injured during participation
- Disciplinary action if needed

Communication coaches expect from parents

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches

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

It is difficult to accept one's child not playing as much as one would hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgments based on what they believe to be the best for all students involved. As indicated in the list above, certain topics can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other topics, such as those described in the next segment, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches

- Playing Time
- Team Strategy
- Play Calling
- Other Student – Athletes

Remember the coach is involved as a coach because he/she is sincerely fond of children and is an experienced professional. Coaches have different ways of dealing with people and situations. The lives of student-athletes are enriched by interacting with different types of leaders. Please be supportive of their decisions.

Procedures for discussing a concern with a coach

1. Schedule an appointment with the coach.
2. If the concern is not resolved, contact the Athletic Director to arrange a conference. A meeting will be arranged with the coach, parent and Athletic Director.
3. If the concern continues to be unresolved, contact the Assistant Superintendent followed by the Superintendent if the issue is ongoing.

Athletic Behavioral Code of Conduct

The Middle Country Athletic office embraces the New York State Education Department's Educational Goals of a Quality Interscholastic Athletic Program, or the "4 Cs":

The mission of New York State interscholastic athletic programs is to foster the quest for excellence by creating an educational and competitive experience within an atmosphere of sportsmanship. Successful programs develop individual and team potential by promoting high standards of competence, character, civility, and citizenship.

Competence

A student athlete in a quality program is competent in terms of:

Skill Development

Knowledge of the game/Strategies

Fitness/Conditioning/Healthy behavior

Character

A student athlete in a quality program demonstrates:

Responsibility

Accountability

Dedication

Trustworthiness/Fair play

Self Control

Civility

A student athlete in a quality program demonstrates civility toward others, showing:

Respect

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

A student athlete in a quality program demonstrates citizenship through actions showing evidence of:

Loyalty/Commitment

Teamwork

Role Modeling

Being a member of the Middle Country Interscholastic Athletic Program is a privilege not a right. Each is responsible, as a student athlete, coach, parent, and teacher, to continually strive to better him/herself in all of the 4 Cs.

Interscholastic Athletic Program Required Forms:

- Student-Parent Regulations Consent Form
- Athletic Code of Conduct–Alcohol/Drug Intervention Guidelines
- School Harassment Guidelines
- Health History Form
- Extracurricular Eligibility/Intervention Policy

Related Links:

- Suffolk County/ Section XI (schedules, game locations, and directions):
www.sectionxi.org/
- New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA):
www.nysphsaa.org/
- Newsday (results, articles, standings...):
<http://www.newsday.com/sports/highschool/>
- NCAA clearing house (college recruiting information): www.ncaa.org/