

NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT-ATHLETE and PARENT HANDBOOK

2024-25

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Students Code of Conduct

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ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Steve Kirkpatrick	Superintendent
Dr. Matt Meakin	Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Jason Young	Business Manager
Mr. Matt LaBuda	Assistant to the Superintendent
Mr. Steve Lehman	High School Principal
Mr. Michael Walker	Assistant High School Principal
Mr. Ryan Edwards	Assistant High School Principal
Mr. Troy Sauer	Middle School Principal
Mr. Nolan McArdle	Assistant Middle School Principal
Ms. Angie Gaido	Director of Athletics
Mrs. Jayme Slothower	Athletic Administrative Assistant
Mr. Donnie Russell	Athletic Trainer
Mrs. Kayla Lehman	Athletic Trainer

PIAA SPORT OFFERINGS

BOYS

Baseball
Basketball
Cheerleading
Cross Country
Football
Golf
Lacrosse
Soccer
Swimming/Diving
Tennis
Track & Field
Volleyball
Wrestling
Bocci Ball
Club Bowling

GIRLS

Basketball
Cheerleading
Cross Country
Field Hockey
Golf
Lacrosse
Soccer
Softball
Swimming/Diving
Tennis
Track & Field
Volleyball
Wrestling
Bocci Ball
Club Bowling

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Northern York County School District Athletic Department. Every school year, more than 600 student-athletes participate in Northern interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12. The administration and coaching staff are proud of the life experiences and life lessons that can be taught to our student-athletes through participating on our teams.

The goal of the Handbook for Student-Athletes and Parents of Student-Athletes is to effectively communicate the role of the administration, coaches, players, parents and booster clubs in administering a successful interscholastic athletic program for students in grades 7-12. Additionally, the handbook will present PIAA and Northern athletic policies (*See Appendix D*), procedures and guidelines so that the program can be successfully administered. We thank you for using the information in the Handbook and being a student-athlete and parent who helps make the program stronger, better and more productive for all of our students.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Being a parent of a student-athlete can be rewarding and also challenging. The rewards and responsibilities of parenting are often complicated by being a parent of a student-athlete. We hope this handbook assists your understanding of the Northern School District mission, philosophy, program objectives, policies (*See Appendix D*), procedures and guidelines. Please take time to review this information with your son or daughter. If you have questions regarding the information in this handbook, please contact the Athletic Office at 717-432-8691 ext 2014.

PHILOSOPHY

The Northern York County School District offers numerous activities which are an extension of the classroom. The goal and purpose of interscholastic athletics is to TEACH students the meaning and understanding of sportsmanship, commitment, fairness, sacrifice, teamwork and hard work. Additional goals include knowing how to win and lose with class and grace, increasing the knowledge of the activity, realizing potential, developing a healthy lifestyle and skill development. The activities are laboratories for learning. The Northern York County School District school board, administrators, teachers and coaches are committed to excellence and providing the best opportunities for students. The participants must keep in mind that they are often in the public eye and that their personal conduct on and off the field must always be above reproach. Student athletes have an obligation to create a favorable image and to gain the respect of their peers and adult citizens of the community.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Parent-Player Relationship

The attitude of the parent can be the most influential factor in determining if a student- athlete has a rewarding interscholastic athletic experience or a disappointing interscholastic athletic experience. The attitude of the parent is more influential than the talent level of the student- athlete, the amount of playing time, the attitude of the coach, the attitude of the players or the win-loss record. Many student-athletes describe the "worst 15 minutes of the day" as the ride home in the car after a practice or competition due to the parent's negative attitude the student-athlete, the coach or the teammates. What a student- athlete needs the most is unconditional love and support from the parents no matter what happens during practices and games.

The Player- Coach Relationship

Throughout the growth of youth sports during the past 25 years, many adults believe they understand or perhaps know more than their coaches. Many parents believe they have degree of expertise from playing or coaching experiences. While this knowledge may heighten your appreciation of the sport, as a parent, you are not the coach. The player- coach relationship is the most critical relationship in athletics. A parent can have a pronounced effect of this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all the decisions of the coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a profound effect upon your child. If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and will likely carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You as a parent can greatly affect this delicate relationship. Receiving technical or strategic instructions at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions or during competitions. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect their playing time or whether they win a starting position on the team.

The Parent-Coach Relationship

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare and success. You want the best for him or her. However, the athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial for the success of the team. If you should have questions or concerns, do not approach the coach at the conclusion of a contest or during a practice. At this time coaches have other responsibilities and may be very emotional. You should call and make an appointment for a later time and approach the meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner. One of the responsibilities of a coach is to meet with the team at the conclusion of a contest. Student-athletes should not pause to talk to parents immediately after the game. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in interscholastic athletics.

The Parent -Official Relationship

The age old question often used by irate fans to coaches and athletic directors is "Where did you find these officials?" Each sport in the Mid Penn Conference has an official's assignor who assigns the officials for every game for the entire season. Officials are evaluated by the coaches at the conclusion of each season. Officials agree to follow a code of ethics; they do not care or have an interest in which team wins the contest. The games will not be played without PIAA certified officials. As in any vocation, there are great, good and average officials. However, each official is doing their best to provide a safe, unbiased and structured environment for the student-athletes. As a parent, you should recognize that nothing positive will result in yelling and criticizing officials. In fact, many negative actions can occur by a parent yelling at the officials. For example, you will embarrass your child, you will look foolish, you will set a poor example that others may follow, you will escalate a negative environment and you may be removed from the competition. Always do your best to display good sportsmanship at all times.

The Spectator- Cheerleaders Relationship

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into to the fans and spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Please do not take this responsibility into your own hands; that is inappropriate. Fans that leave the stands to direct cheers may often cause or lead to confrontations with the opponents. Please follow the cheerleaders' directions and support their efforts. The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect of the contest.

Parent- Athletic Director Relationship

The Athletic Director supervises the administering of all high school and middle school athletic teams. Prior to approaching the Athletic Director regarding the management of an athletic team, a parent should first speak to the coach. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the coach, a parent may request a meeting with the Athletic Director and the coach. However, the issue of playing time, coaching techniques and strategies are not appropriate topics of discussion with the coach or Athletic Director. If the parent is not satisfied with the coach- Athletic Director meeting, then the parent should contact the building principal.

THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CHAIN OF COMMAND

When dealing with concerns the following chain of command should be used:

1. Student-Athlete
2. Coach
3. Athletic Director
4. Principal
5. Superintendent
6. School Board

Please follow the chain of command in all situations, do not go directly to the superintendent or school board as they will refer you back to the appropriate level.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION PLAN

Both parenting and coaching can be very difficult vocations. By better understanding each other, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to our student-athletes. As parents, when your children become involved on the Northern athletic teams, you have the right to understand the expectations which are placed upon you and your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's athletic team.

1. Philosophy of the coach and the Northern York County School District athletic program.
2. Expectations the coach has for the student- athlete.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team and school requirements- behavior and academic.
5. Procedure if a student-athlete is injured during participation and insurance information.
6. Actions that could lead to discipline, which may result in the denial of the student-athlete's participation.
7. The dissemination and collection of the Parent Code of Conduct. (See Appendix B)

HOW TO HANDLE AN ATHLETIC TEAM CONCERN

1. Encourage your child to speak directly to the coach. Many concerns can be resolved through this process. We hope to teach our student-athletes how to problem solve, this is a great opportunity to learn this valuable life lesson.
2. Contact the coach to schedule an appointment.
3. If the coach cannot be reached, contact the Athletic Director. We will assist you in scheduling a meeting.
4. Do not present your concerns to a coach before a contest, after a contest (This can be an emotional time for both the coach and the parent) or during a practice.
5. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a resolution, contact the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH

1. How your child is being treated by the coach or others.
2. Ways that your son/daughter may improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior or academic performance.

It is difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you would hope. Coaches are professionals and they make judgments based on what they believe to be best for the team. As you can see from the above list, there are certain topics that should be discussed with the coach. Other topics, such as playing time, coaching strategies, and concerns about other student-athletes should be left to the discretion of the coach.

COMMUNICATIONS COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Express your concerns directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any scheduling conflicts well in advance.
3. Support of all the members of the team, including the coaches and administration.
4. Work to promote a positive environment that is conducive to the development of student-athletes.
5. Become knowledgeable with and review the philosophy, rules, regulations and guidelines pertaining to Northern Athletics.
6. Communicate all concerns in a timely manner, following the proper protocol.
7. Treat all coaching personnel and administrators with courtesy and respect and encourage your child to do the same.
8. Understand that team goals are more important than individual goals.

Participation in athletics can offer our student-athletes the opportunity to experience some of the most rewarding times of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way the parents and students expect. At those times discussion with the coach is encouraged. However, sometimes students will fail to achieve their goals. That is OK as we often learn more from our failures than we do our successes. Student-athletes should be taught to accept and overcome failure and not to embrace it.

REQUIREMENTS FOR NORTHERN STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE ON NORTHERN ATHLETIC TEAMS.

1. The student must be enrolled in the Northern School District and provide proof of residency. A valid driver's license for the parent/guardian showing residency must be provided at the time of registration if the enrollment is from a transfer from another school district to Northern.
2. The student must be in grades 7- 12.
3. The student must meet age requirements. A student -athlete may not participate on a junior high athletic team when he or she is 16 years old before July 1. A student- athlete may not participate on a senior high athletic team if he or she is 19 years old before July 1.
4. The student must have a pre-participation athletic physical (dated June 1" or later) and if the student has been injured in a previous season a recertification physical form may be required.
5. The student athlete must meet academic eligibility requirements. *See Appendix A* – Student Athletics Code of Conduct for specific requirements.
6. The student-athlete must exhibit good behavior in the classroom and on the athletic team. A coach has the authority to deny a student-athlete from trying out or participating on a Northern athletic team if the student-athlete has exhibited behavior that is detrimental to management and/or cohesion of the team. Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a guaranteed right.
7. A student and his/her parent/guardian must sign the Student-Athlete and Parent code of conduct forms before the end of the first week of the season.

GENERAL INFORMATION

COLLEGE SELECTION AND RECRUITING

See Appendix F – NCAA Eligibility Center – Playing Sports in College

The Northern York School District has partnered with Dynamite Sports www.dynamitesports.com to help with the college selection and recruitment process. The Eligibility Calculator is a great tool and free of charge and can be found on their website. Any student-athlete considering playing sports in college should contact his/her guidance counselor at the beginning of their freshman year to ensure the proper academic classes are scheduled.

WEBSITE

Athletic department information can be found on the Northern York County School District website www.northernpolarbears.com. Follow the link to athletic updates. Each sports team will also have a link to the website. Another important website is www.northernsports.org. This website has the most recent athletic schedules for all sports in addition to directions to all away contests. You will also get instant notification of any schedule changes and/or cancellations by signing up with your e-mail address. This is a great communication tool for our parents and fans.

INJURIES TO ATHLETES

Injuries to student-athletes involved in interscholastic sports are inevitable. Sooner or later almost all athletes sustain some type of injury, hopefully it is minor, and the athlete can return to his/her sport in a short amount of time. When an athlete sustains an injury in practice or during a game, the athlete should notify the Athletic Trainer and coach immediately. Northern has partnered with Drayer Physical Therapy to provide our Athletic Trainers needs. Mr. Donnie Russell and Kayla Lehman- 432-8691 ext 2016, drussell@drayerpt.com or klehman@northernnyork.org are our Athletic Trainers. They usually report to the high school each day between 1:00 and 2:00PM. The Athletic Trainers are responsible for the care, rehabilitation, treatment and prevention of all athletic injuries. They also manage the pre-participation sports physical examinations.

SECONDARY ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The Northern York School District does not provide insurance for Northern student-athletes participating on School Board approved interscholastic athletic teams.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENT- ATHLETES

Participation on a Northern interscholastic athletic team requires the student- athlete to use the NYCS D approved transportation carrier to and home from away athletic contests and practices. The NYCS D will provide transportation for all student- athletes in school authorized vehicles when a contest has been scheduled at an opponent's facility. All NYCS D athletes must ride on the school provided transportation to away games and home from away games. The only exceptions to riding school district transportation are:

1. A family emergency
2. A conflict with a school sponsored activity. In both cases, the head coach must be given a written request from the parent/guardian in advance of the event.

BOOSTER CLUBS

See Appendix I

The purpose of the Booster Clubs is to support the student- athletes, coaches and administration in enhancing the opportunities and experiences for the athletes. Booster clubs do not have input regarding coaching strategies or personnel decisions.

SPORTSMANSHIP

See Appendix J

Sportsmanship is expected from student-athletes, coaches, administrators, parents and fans at all times. We teach our student- athletes to win with class and lose with dignity. Please demonstrate good sportsmanship at all school sponsored events.

SPECIALIZATION IN SPORTS

See Appendix K

Specialization in one sport is not in the best interest of young athletes. In addition to having higher injury rates than students who do more than 1sport, there is a higher drop-out rate and the regret that they didn't do more activities with their friends and class members. College coaches most often look for well rounded athletes who can demonstrate time management skills and who have varied athletic abilities.

AWARDS

The Northern Athletic Department will sponsor the following awards for the current school year:

Certificate- awarded to all middle school athletes and those high school athletes who do not earn a varsity letter. Athletes will be earning a varsity letter if they are in 60% of competitions and discretion of the head coach.

"1" year letter- white chenille letter with accompanying 1st year certificate

"2" year letter- 2nd year purple certificate

"3" year letter- 3rd year silver certificate

"4" year letter- 4th year gold certificate

Sportsmanship- certificate

MVP- pewter plate

THE PURPLE N- awarded to any athlete who letters in 3 sports during 1school year.

Mitchell Fernbaugh Award- awarded to a senior athlete, voted on by the coaches, Athletic Director and Athletic Trainer. Award recognizes dedication, coachability, hard work and sportsmanship.

Other awards-

Unsung Hero

Booster Clubs and coaches sponsor other awards

Two Sport Participation Policy and Procedure

The following guidelines must be followed in order to certify an athlete to participate in two sports during the same sport season:

1. The athlete must determine and announce their major sport and the athlete cannot change their choice of a major sport after the date of the first legal competition.
2. The head coaches of each sport must meet by the end of the first week of the season and prepare a schedule that allows attendance on both teams.
3. The 2 sport athlete cannot quit either of the 2 sports and must finish the season in good standing to be eligible for any awards. The athlete may quit both sports but not just one.
4. The coaches of each sport should have a meeting with the athlete and his/her parents before the first date of legal competition to review the schedule and commitments.

Admission Prices to Athletic Contests

High School and Junior High Athletics Admission Price:

-Adults: \$5.00

-Students: \$3.00