



# Parent/Guardian & Student-Athlete Handbook



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## **STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

*Tenaflly High School prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the Office of Special Education.*

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## TENAFLY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PHILOSOPHY

Athletics can be an integral part of a student's experience here at Tenaflly High School and should be an essential component of the overall educational process. Participation in athletics develops the alert, responsible, well-informed, and well-adjusted individual, which should serve as a vital component of the overall learning experience for our students.

We at Tenaflly will win with pride and grace and lose with dignity and sportsmanship. Participation and winning should be a byproduct of doing things "With Tiger Pride" rather than the belief that it is important to win at all costs. Doing things in this manner gives student-athletes the opportunity to become the best version of themselves, through hard work and dedication.

Coaches are educators first and should be enthusiastic, energetic, and well-prepared for each day. They should strive to make each of our athletes reach their fullest potential, establishing standards of conduct and sportsmanship that are beyond reproach. Coaches serve as role models for the young student-athletes they lead and will conduct themselves as such each and every day.

The Tenaflly athletic programs should cultivate and nourish attributes, such as but not limited to, **loyalty, respect, unselfishness, courtesy, and sportsmanship**. Our student athletes also act as role models, both on and off the athletic fields, for our Tenaflly community and will conduct themselves as such. The athletic program, overall, should accomplish the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of students in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Students who participate in athletics are entitled to a positive and enriching experience through quality coaching, fair competition, and respectful relationships with fellow athletes. Student-athletes involved in our athletic programs are entitled to the highest standards of safety and support, including access to appropriate protective equipment, well-maintained facilities, adequate insurance coverage, proper medical care, and excellence in coaching. Finally, and most importantly, we will strive to be the best we can be at all times and always display our **"Tiger Pride."**

## **PROGRAM LEVELS, GOALS & EXPECTATIONS**

The Tenaflly High School athletic program is highly competitive. Please understand that when your child signs up for a team, there is a real possibility they may not be selected if a team reduction is necessary, or they may not be placed where you or they think they should; i.e. JV or Varsity. The school believes it is the coach's responsibility and right to select the team with whom they will work the entire season.

**Freshman Sports** - The purpose of the freshman level is to:

- Develop and refine basic skills, learn the rules as they pertain to interscholastic sports
- Transition athletes from recreation level sports to interscholastic level sports
- Provide playing time to all participants at the coach's discretion

The Freshman team shall be composed exclusively of ninth-grade students who have demonstrated appropriate academic progress, a positive attitude, and the physical and sport-specific skills indicating the potential to compete at the varsity level in the future. The number of students selected for each team may vary depending on the sport.

We will keep a larger number of players on the Freshman level, as the focus is on player development and not necessarily wins and losses.

**Junior Varsity Sports** - The purpose of the junior varsity level is to:

- Further develop the skills of the athlete
- Increase the intensity of competition
- Prepare the athlete for the varsity level
- Place more emphasis on winning, but not to the extent of the varsity level
- Provide playing time to all participants at the coach's discretion

The junior varsity ("JV") team will consist of primarily sophomores and possibly a few juniors and/or freshmen that have demonstrated the ability to contribute at the JV level. The JV players must exhibit appropriate academic progress, proper attitude, physical and sport-specific skills indicative of a varsity performer. In rare circumstances, a junior who shows the potential to be a varsity starter or a key contributor as a senior or who is a part time varsity player may play JV if the varsity is particularly strong at his/her/their position. The number of players selected for each team may vary from sport to sport. We will keep a larger number of players on the JV level, as the focus is on player development and not necessarily wins and losses.

### **Athletic Program Roster Sizes**

The following table summarizes the typical roster sizes for various athletic programs across Freshman, Junior Varsity (JV), and Varsity levels.

| <b>Program</b>   | <b>Season</b> | <b>Recommended<br/>Freshman Roster Size</b> | <b>Recommended<br/>JV Roster Size</b> | <b>Recommended<br/>Varsity Roster Size</b> |
|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Football         | Fall          | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | Unlimited                                  |
| Cross Country    | Fall          | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | Limited<br>(based on performance times)    |
| Boys Soccer      | Fall          | 18-22                                       | 18-22                                 | 18-22                                      |
| Girls Soccer     | Fall          | 18-22                                       | 18-22                                 | 18-22                                      |
| Girls Volleyball | Fall          | 12-15                                       | 12-15                                 | 12-15                                      |
| Cheerleading     | Fall          | N/A                                         | N/A                                   | 18-25<br>(skill required)                  |
| Wrestling        | Winter        | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | Unlimited                                  |
| Winter Track     | Winter        | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | Limited<br>(based on performance times)    |
| Swimming         | Winter        | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | Limited<br>(based on performance times)    |
| Ice Hockey       | Winter        | Unlimited                                   | Unlimited                             | 12-18                                      |
| Boys Basketball  | Winter        | 12-15                                       | 12-15                                 | 12-15                                      |
| Girls Basketball | Winter        | 12-15                                       | 12-15                                 | 12-15                                      |
| Alpine Ski       | Winter        | N/A                                         | N/A                                   | Unlimited<br>(skill required)              |
| Cheerleading     | Winter        | N/A                                         | N/A                                   | 15-18<br>(skill required)                  |
| Boys Golf        | Spring        | N/A                                         | N/A                                   | 10-12                                      |
| Girls Golf       | Spring        | N/A                                         | N/ A                                  | 10-12                                      |

| Program             | Season | Recommended Freshman Roster Size | Recommended JV Roster Size | Recommended Varsity Roster Size |
|---------------------|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Girls Flag Football | Spring | N/A                              | N/A                        | Unlimited                       |
| Girls Lacrosse      | Spring | Unlimited                        | Unlimited                  | 18-22                           |
| Boys Lacrosse       | Spring | Unlimited                        | Unlimited                  | 18-22                           |
| Baseball            | Spring | 12-15                            | 12-15                      | 12-15                           |
| Softball            | Spring | 12-15                            | 12-15                      | 12-15                           |

**Varsity Sports** - The purpose of the varsity level is to:

- Develop the skills and physical conditioning of the athlete to his or her fullest potential;
- Allow the talented athlete the chance to excel; and
- Provide athletes with the opportunities to set goals, strive to achieve them, and serve as role models for younger athletes.

*We will keep a **LIMITED** number of players on the Varsity level as the focus is on competition and achieving the best possible results. Players who participate in JV and V games on the same day (in accordance with NJSIAA rules) may practice with either the JV or V level based on need.* Program goals include winning, team building skills, and enjoyment of the activity. Coaches will notify students during the pre-season whom they feel may see limited playing time.

Playing time is something that is earned during practice. This means the player must have demonstrated athletic competence, an understanding of the game plan, and the required level of conditioning necessary to perform. It is the coach's right to make these decisions.

The Varsity team will normally consist of juniors and seniors, but freshmen and sophomores who have demonstrated the ability to be starters or key contributors may also be members of the team. The Varsity player must show the mental development, proper attitude, physical and sport specific skills to be starters or essential contributors to the success of the team. The rostered number of players selected for each team varies from sport to sport. However, it is the recommendation of the Athletic Department that Varsity programs keep their rosters streamlined to maximize playing time while allowing other players to develop on the underclassman levels.

**Note: Regardless of the level, every player must demonstrate the skills needed to be a member of the athletic program for which he/she/they are trying out. No player is guaranteed a position in the present year simply because they were a part of the program the previous year.**

## **24 Hour Rule:**

Any player, parent, guardian, or spectator who has concerns, comments, or suggestions regarding any aspect of a program activity is required to observe a 24-hour waiting period before contacting a coach or administrator. This policy is intended to allow time for reflection and constructive communication.

Under no circumstances should game officials be approached by players, parents, guardians, or spectators before, during, or after contests.

If concerns remain after the 24-hour period, individuals are expected to follow the established channels of communication as outlined in the program's code of conduct.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP AND SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS**

Sportsmanship, the quality of fair play, is of the utmost importance and is the highest priority for our athletic program.

The NJSIAA and The Big North Conference Spectator Code of Behavior for athletic events will be posted at all athletic venues.

Spectators have an important role in the success of an athletic program. If the program is going to be successful, spectators must display good sportsmanship, courteous treatment of visitors and officials, and absolute fairness under all conditions. It is important that spectators allow the players to play, the coaches to coach, and the officials to officiate at all times. All spectators must follow the Big North Conference Spectator Code of Behavior for all athletic contests. Please review the Big North Conference Code of Behavior with your student-athlete.

## **BIG NORTH CODE OF BEHAVIOR FOR ATHLETIC EVENTS**

Being a positive role model fan, coach and player means you are expected to:

- To honor and obey all rules and regulations of the NJSIAA and the Big North Conference [NJSIAA GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2025 – 2026](#)
- Enthusiastically encourage your own team.
- Refrain from negative remarks, booing, demeaning chants, gestures, etc.
- Treat the opponent, the officials, and other fans with respect and courtesy. Their safety and comfort should never be endangered.
- Accept all decisions made by the officials.
- Remain in the stands while play is in progress.
- Follow state regulations that prohibit noisemakers, signs and banners

Any person obviously and intentionally violating the spirit of the code will be subject to ejection from the contest and may not be allowed to attend further athletic events.

## **PLAYERS**

- Good sportsmanship is the mark of a good player.
- Do not swear or fight.
- Do nothing which will bring discredit to your school.
- Win graciously; lose with class and dignity.
- Accept the official's judgement without question.
- Give the best for your team and your school.
- Avoid any reference to color, creed or nationality of your opponents.
- All team cheering should be positive with no intimidating or demeaning chants, gestures, etc.
- All players must follow the [Spectator Code of Conduct](#).

## **CONTEST DISQUALIFICATION**

An athlete/spectator who displays unsportsmanlike flagrant misconduct, physical or verbal, will be disqualified from the next two regularly scheduled games/meets, with the exception of football, which will carry a one game disqualification.

**Disqualification/ejection is a judgment call by the official - the decision is final, and may not be appealed.**

A disqualified player/spectator may not be present at any contest in that sport during the period of disqualification (this includes, but not limited to locker room, on the bus, on the sidelines, or in the bleachers/stands before, during or after the game).

Any player/spectator disqualified a second time during a 365-day period from the first disqualification will have the penalty doubled. On the third offense, the player/spectator will be suspended indefinitely and must apply in writing to the NJSIAA, through the office of his/her/their principal for reinstatement.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT SPECTATOR RULES TO FOLLOW**

- Cheer positively for your child and for our team.
- Adhere to the rules of “No Numbers, No Names, No Negativity.”
  - Spectators should never “call out” any player by number.
  - Spectators should never “call out” any player by name.
  - Spectators should keep all comments positive - even when they are in disagreement with an officiating call or coaching decision.
- Do not yell and/or disparage the officials, coaches or fans.
  - The Spectator Code of Conduct ([District Policy 9163](#)) prohibits the verbal or physical harassment of any official, coach, participant or fan.
  - Violation of this standard will result in ejection from the event and an immediate 2-game suspension from subsequent events.
- Stay off the field/court/diamond/track at all times, unless you are called onto the playing surface area by the coach, athletic trainer, or Director of Athletics. Failure to do so can lead to dismissal from the game and/or suspension from further contests.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN-COACH COMMUNICATION**

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 children. As a Parent/Guardian, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child when your child becomes involved in our athletic programs. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Prior to the start of each season, the coach will host an introductory meeting for all students interested in trying out for the team. The date and time of the meeting will be announced and/or communicated via email. Specific items relative to the sport i.e., rules, policies, try-out period, and practice and game schedules are reviewed and discussed at this time.

The communication between the coach and the parent/guardian is essential to having an effective athletic program. The following coach-parent communication guidelines have been designed to foster appropriate lines of communication between the parent and the coach.

### **Communications You Should Expect From Your Student-Athlete's Coach:**

- Their Team Philosophy;
- Expectations the coach has for your student-athlete as well as all the players on the team;
- Location and times of all practices and contests;
- Team requirements: in and out of season;
- Procedure to follow if your student-athlete is injured during the season;
- Consequences for breaking team rules;
- The anticipated number of athletes per team and level.

### **Communication Our Coaches Should Expect From Our Parents/Guardians:**

- Direct communication of concerns to coach **via email only**;
- Advance notification of any schedule conflicts;
- Reporting of any emergency situations involving the athlete;
- No text messaging to coaches as an acceptable form of communication;
- Adherence to the "24-Hour Rule" (no discussions immediately before or after games or practices to ensure calm, productive conversations).

### **Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:**

- The treatment of your student-athlete mentally and physically;
- Ways to help your student-athlete improve;
- Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior.

We understand that limited playing time can be difficult for parents and student-athletes. Coaches are trained professionals who make judgment decisions based on what they believe is in the best interest of the team as a whole. While certain topics may be appropriate for discussion with your child's coach, other matters, outlined below, are considered coaching

decisions and must remain at the coach's discretion.

**Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches:**

- Team Strategy;
- Play calling;
- Other student athletes.

**Procedure for Contacting a Coach - Issue Resolution:**

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent/guardian. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern:

- Email the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, call or email Mr. Joseph Carollo, Director of Athletics, 201-816-6645, [JCarollo@tenafly.k12.nj.us](mailto:JCarollo@tenafly.k12.nj.us).
- A meeting will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.
- Parents/guardians should not attempt to confront a coach immediately before or after a contest or practice, as these are often emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings at such times rarely lead to productive resolution. To ensure constructive communication, the 24-hour rule should be observed before discussing concerns with a coach.

**If Concerns Remain Unresolved:**

- Call and set up an appointment with the Director of Athletics to discuss the situation. Three questions will be asked prior to a meeting being set up:
  - Did you speak with your student-athlete about the issue?
  - Did your student-athlete speak to the coach directly about the issue?
  - Did you meet with the coach including your student-athlete and speak about the issue directly?
- A meeting will be set up with the coach, parent, and Director of Athletics to continue the conversation and agree on a reasonable solution.
- If an amenable solution is not achieved, a meeting with the parent, Director of Athletics and High School Principal will be set up and further discussion will ensue.
- If an amenable solution is still not achieved, a meeting with the parent, Director of Athletics and Superintendent will be set up and further discussion will ensue.
- If an amenable solution is not achieved the issue may rise to the level of the Board of Education.
- Resources for parents to address concerns are listed below:
  - [Policy 5521 - HIB Policy](#)
  - [Policy 9130 Public Complaints and Grievances](#)
  - [Policy 4281; Regulation 4281 - Inappropriate Staff Conduct](#)
- If a student-athlete or parent/guardian feels uncomfortable approaching the coach with a concern, they are encouraged to report the matter to the Director of Athletics or the

building principal to arrange a confidential meeting. While the district will make every effort to respect privacy, there may be circumstances in which school officials are required to share information in order to ensure student safety and comply with legal reporting obligations. Retaliation by any Tenaflly Public Schools employee against a student or family for raising a concern or filing a complaint is strictly prohibited.