Deerfield School



Student-Athletes, Parents & Coaches Handbook 2026-2027

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GENERAL INFORMATION

MESSAGE FROM ATHLETIC COORDINATOR

This handbook has been prepared for the Student-Athletes, Parents, and Coaches to ensure a better understanding of the Deerfield School's interscholastic athletic program. As role models, the coaches will administer structure, direction, discipline, and a sense of values while exercising open communication and cooperation with all who are involved with their teams. We look forward to working with the athletes and parents and hope to provide the best athletic experience possible.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Interscholastic athletics plays an important role in the total educational development of the student body. Competition in sports teaches a young person how to function as an individual within a team in such a manner that both the individual and team benefit. With the proper supervision, athletes learn how to maintain a positive attitude while experiencing the emotions of both winning and losing.

It is the intent of the Mountainside Board of Education to provide on the Middle School level a comprehensive, well-planned, and well-balanced program of interscholastic athletics for girls and boys who can benefit from participation. The programs shall be managed and teams coached in a manner to achieve the following objectives:

- To promote individual and team desire for excellence while emphasizing that interscholastic sport is kept in perspective and that first priority for all students is intellectual and emotional growth
- To develop and maintain physical fitness
- To develop attitudes in sports that extend beyond school and apply in life
- To develop self-confidence and self-respect
- To develop a sense of responsibility and loyalty to school, team, coach and self
- To engender the enthusiasm which positively impacts the whole school and student body
- To teach new skills
- To provide opportunities that observe, practice, and exemplify good sportsmanship
- To encourage students to develop and possess the highest standards of character through participation in competitive athletics

ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION IS A PRIVILEGE

The Deerfield School Athletic Program is not a right, but a privilege. This privilege is afforded to those individuals who possess the ability, attitude, disposition, cooperation, spirit, and desire to respect the student body and school community in a manner that reflects favorably on the reputation of Deerfield School.

The Deerfield School takes great pride in its athletic program and its success. Student-athletes will be expected to have a high degree of commitment. The payoff for these sacrifices is multifaceted and long-term. It is a privilege and honor for a student to be part of an athletic team and representative of the school and community. With this in mind, eligibility standards, self-discipline, hard work, and pride will be stressed. Administration has the right to limit the participation of student-athletes if academics, behavior, or sportsmanship are not satisfactory.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is required of all Deerfield Schools student-athletes. The athletic fields and gymnasium are an extension of the classroom. The attitudes and behaviors required and expected in a classroom setting are required and expected in the athletic areas. There is no tolerance for unsportsmanlike conduct.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

Honor the "Game"
Respect the sport you are playing
Treat players, coaches, officials, and parents with the utmost respect
Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times
Think and play as a member of a team
Demonstrate concern for others
Be loyal to your teammates
Respect the facilities
Encourage your teammates

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS AND OTHER FANS

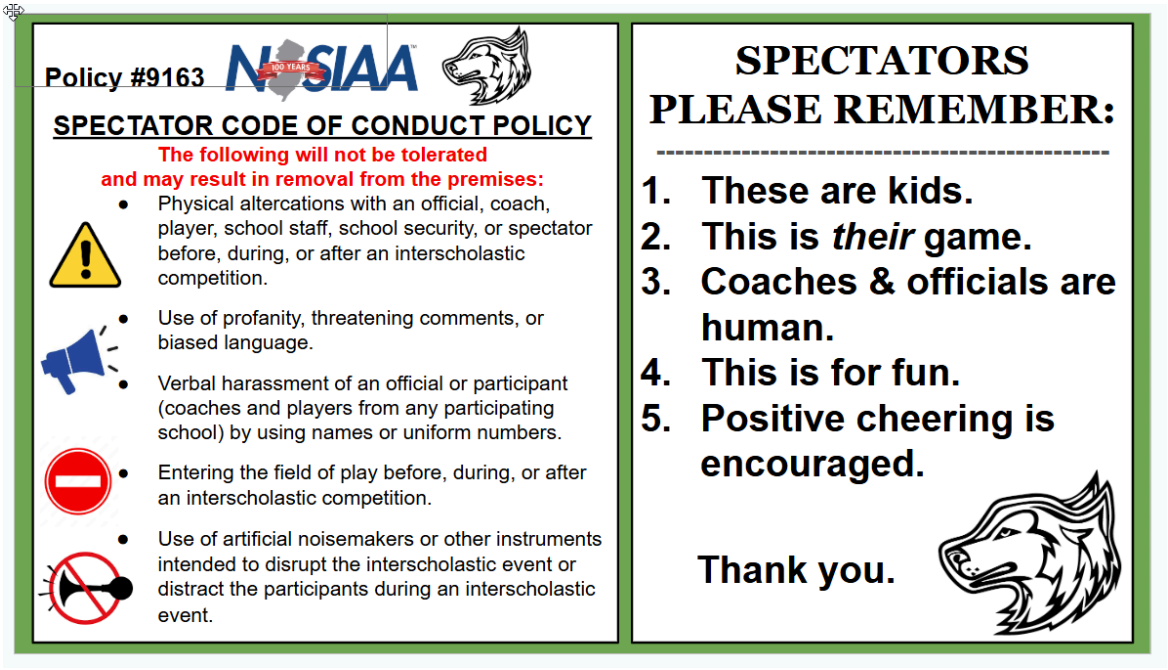
Honor the "Game"
Respect the sport your child is playing
Exhibit good sportsmanship
Be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat
Encourage good practice and game habits to enhance your child's skill and maximize his/her abilities
Use positive encouragement to increase confidence and build self-esteem
Stress the importance of commitment to a team to your child
Respect the facilities; without them, there would be no place to play

EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES

Honor the "Game"
Respect the Sport in which you are coaching
Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times
Be a positive role model for all Deerfield School students
Be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat
Encourage good practice and game habits to enhance your child's skill and maximize his/her abilities
Always put the safety and well-being of your players above the desire to win
Use positive encouragement to increase confidence and build self-esteem
Organize fun yet challenging practices
Stress and reward the importance of team play over personal statistics and recognition
Respect the facilities; without them, there would be no place to play

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR FOR ALL EVENTS

Applaud during the introduction of players, coaches, and officials
Accept all decisions of coaches and officials
Handshake among all participants and coaches at the end of the game
Show concern for injured participants



ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

SOCCER	BOYS AND GIRLS	6TH-8TH GRADE
VOLLEYBALL	GIRLS	6TH-8TH GRADE
BASKETBALL	BOYS AND GIRLS	6TH-8TH GRADE
SOFTBALL	GIRLS	6TH-8TH GRADE
BASEBALL	BOYS	7TH-8TH GRADE
WRESTLING*	BOYS	6TH-8TH GRADE

*(wrestling is a Berkeley Heights run program)

THE ROLE OF THE COACH

The coaches will comply with the rules, regulations, and procedures of the Mountainside Board of Education and the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA). Additionally, coaches will comply with any and all regulations regarding safety training described by either group. Coaches will exhibit a commitment to the safety, performance, and behavior of the player during the practice and competitive events. The coach will seek appropriate professional guidance or make an appropriate referral for the student as necessary, consistent with existing school procedures. All athletic coaches will be trained in first aid, CPR, head injuries, and use of the defibrillator.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible for participation in the Mountainside School District interscholastic program, a student must be in compliance with the following:

1. Must demonstrate an overall "C-" average or better across the academic content area.
2. Home-schooled children in grades 6 through 8 are eligible for participation.
3. Have a valid and approved (by the school physicians) physical form and accompanying paperwork on file in the health office
4. Paid Fees

5. Maintain appropriate behavior
6. Sign the Athletic Guidelines Statement of Assurance
7. A student who fails to observe school rules for student conduct may forfeit his/her eligibility for participation in school district-sponsored programs of athletic competition.
8. A student must maintain a satisfactory record of attendance to be eligible for participation in athletic competition. An attendance record is unsatisfactory if the number of unexcused absences exceeds 5 school days in the marking period prior to the student commencing participation in the school district-sponsored programs of athletic competition

   (As per the Mountainside District Policies)

PER THE STUDENT HANDBOOK:

A student will not be able to participate in the extracurricular activity, including practices, games, meetings, and performances, until all outstanding work has been completed.

Parents/guardians and students are to be aware that detentions take precedence over after-school activities and athletics. Detentions will not be scheduled around students' extracurricular activities. **Parents/guardians and students are reminded that any student who serves detention on the day of an extracurricular activity will not be permitted to participate in that activity.**

Students will be put on Academic Probation if they have a **current or cumulative** average below 65 (D) in any full-year academic class.

Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who do not meet the Participation Eligibility Standards of Deerfield School will not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities.

- **6th Grade Participation Eligibility Standards**
- **7th Grade Participation Eligibility Standards**
- **8th Grade Participation Eligibility Standards**

The school nurse will forward all completed medical forms to the school physician for approval. The student will be eligible to participate once all forms are approved.

Any student suspended from school (in-school or out-of-school suspension) is ineligible to participate in any activity that day and until the conclusion of the suspension. Students who have detention will not be able to participate in interscholastic sports on that day. The student-athlete may dress and sit with the team.

As stated previously, participation in interscholastic activities is a privilege, not a right. Students granted the privilege of participation must assume the responsibility of good conduct and citizenship.

TEAM SELECTION

In accordance with our desire to see high levels of participation in the athletic program, coaches are encouraged to enlist the maximum number of students while maintaining the integrity of their sport. Time, space, facilities, equipment, and other factors can limit squad size.

Choosing the members of the athletic squads is the sole responsibility of the team coach. Coaches will provide the following information to all candidates during a meeting prior to the team's tryouts:

- Dates and times of tryouts
- Criteria used to select the team
- Approximate number of players to be selected
- Practice and game commitment for students who make the team

Student-athletes who are injured during the tryout days shall remain eligible to make the team depending on the seriousness of the injury and demonstrated skill.

Tryout Expectations Letter for Athletes and Parents/Guardians

OTHER COMMITMENTS WHILE "IN SEASON"

Student-athletes are required to attend all practices, team meetings, and games. However, we recognize that students may have a conflict that arises. Students have the responsibility to do everything they can to avoid these conflicts. If a conflict arises, the student will need to inform the coach and work out a solution.

COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES, PARENTS, COACHES

If a parent or student-athlete has a question or concern, they can call or email the coach directly. If a meeting is required, please contact the coach and set up an appointment time convenient for both parent and coach. If the problem/concern is not resolved, please contact the Athletic Coordinator. If the problem is still not resolved, then contact the building Principal.

Please do not confront a coach before or after a game. These can be emotional times for the student-athletes, coaches, and parents. Meetings of this nature do not promote healthy resolution. A "24-hour rule" is suggested for parents when giving feedback or showing concerns regarding a game or practice.

ATTENDANCE

All student-athletes are expected to attend every game and practice unless excused by the coach. It is the responsibility of the player and/or parent to notify the coach of any absences. Repeated unexcused absences may result in loss of playing time or removal from the team.

Attendance at school is an expectation of our student-athletes. A student is not allowed to participate in after-school activities if he/she is not in attendance on that day. Student-athletes must attend school by 11:30 AM to be eligible for participation that day. Additionally, any student-athlete who has an unexcused absence during their physical education class the day of a game or practice is ineligible to participate in the team activity that day.

TRANSPORTATION

The Mountainside School District will provide authorized school vehicles to transport all student-athletes and coaches for away games. In the interest of team unity, morale, and camaraderie, all student-athletes MUST arrive and return from all away games on school-provided transportation.

In extreme circumstances, a student-athlete may ride home after the game with their parent/guardian. This circumstance requires a parent/guardian-signed "Release - Hold Harmless Form" submitted by 12PM the day of the game to the school secretary and coach. The coach will forward the form to the athletic coordinator for record purposes. Other students may not ride with the aforementioned parent or guardian without the written consent of their own parent/guardian. The purpose of such release is for family emergencies, academic needs, and special circumstances.

ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

Practice and game equipment and uniforms will be issued to student-athletes. The student-athlete must be careful that the equipment and other items are maintained in clean and usable condition at all times. Equipment and uniforms may not be altered in any way. Athletes are responsible for all damage to or loss of school-issued equipment or uniforms.

Cleats are not allowed in the school building. They should be removed and cleaned (mud and gravel knocked off) before entering the locker room.

LOCKER ROOM BEHAVIOR

Please keep your locker locked during practice and game times. The Mountainside School District and the coaches are not responsible or liable for lost personal property. Please lock it up. "Horseplay" in the locker room will not be tolerated. Movement in and out of the locker room is to be quick and purposeful. Infractions in the locker room will receive the same consequences as during the school day.

PARTICIPATION FEE

Please note the Board-Approved Fee Schedule for Athletics, Clubs, and Activities:

Activity	Fees*
Athletics	$200 per student ***** $100 for additional siblings who play during the same season

*If a child is approved for Free/Reduced School Meals, the above fees will be waived.

Sport	***Grades***	***Tryout Dates / Games Dates***
Boys Soccer	Grades 6-8	Tryouts beginning of September. Games in September - October
Girls Soccer	Grades 6-8	Tryouts beginning of September. Games in September - October
Girls Volleyball	Grades 6-8	Tryouts beginning of September. Games in September - October
Boys Basketball	Grades 6-8	Tryouts in November. Games December - February
Girls Basketball	Grades 6-8	Tryouts in November. Games December - February
Boys Baseball	Grades 7-8	Tryouts in March. Games in April and May.
Girls Softball	Grades 6-8	Tryouts in March. Games in April and May

STUDENT-ATHLETE HEALTH

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

All student-athletes are required to have a current sports physical on file with the school nurse. A current physical is one performed by the student-athlete's physician within the last 12 months and submitted to the school within the current academic year. This form MUST be approved by the school doctor. Physicals that expire in the middle of the athletic season must be updated within two weeks of the expiration date to maintain athletic eligibility. If a current sports physical is on file, a sports health history update form must still be submitted before trying out for each new sport.

GENERAL: Do not come to practice or competition if you are not feeling well.

SPORTS INJURIES

There is a risk of injury in all sports. All injuries that occur while participating in the Deerfield School Athletics must be reported to the coach and school nurse. The coach will complete an incident report, and the school nurse will then file an injury report.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Medication to be taken during the school day and/or during athletic practices and games, prescribed by the family physician, must be administered by the school nurse. Only students with life-threatening illnesses may carry and self-medicate with EpiPens or inhalers once parental permission and physician approval is obtained in accordance with the Mountainside Board of Education policy.

UMPIRE/OFFICIAL

- Placement of UMP: 46/60: "Plate" Umpire will be positioned behind the pitcher calling balls and strikes, and "Base" Umpire will be positioned behind first base.
- 50/70 and 60/90 will be normal mechanics with an umpire behind the plate calling balls/strikes
- Teams and umpires have the option to have the umpire call the game behind the pitcher's mound if they feel more comfortable.

DRINKS/SNACKS

- All players, coaches, spectators, and umpires should bring their own beverages that are clearly labeled with their name.
- There should not be any shared beverages.
- Sunflower seeds, gum, etc., are not allowed in dugouts or on the field.
- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times.

EQUIPMENT

- Each team should use their own balls while in the field during competition.
- Players will use their own equipment whenever possible. If equipment must be shared, it should be cleaned and then disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant and allowed sufficient time to dry before being used by a new player.

IMPORTANT FOR STUDENT ATHLETES & PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Once you or your child has made the team, **both students and parents MUST sign off** that you have read and understand the information provided in this handbook and in the safety information in the link below. Have a great season! Go Huskies!

➢ Parents/Guardians Acknowledgement Form

➢ Student-Athlete Acknowledgement Form

