

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT
GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Purpose

The purpose of this WPSD Athletic Guideline Handbook is to provide pertinent information and expectations to students and families participating in the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Athletic Program.

Students are expected to read and become familiar with its contents. Coaches, teachers, and administrators expect student-athletes to have knowledge of the contents of the Handbook and will refer to this Handbook whenever questions arise.

Parents are requested to discuss the contents of the Handbook with their son/daughter. Having a common understanding of the rules and regulations that govern extra-curricular activities will assist in significantly reducing concerns and unforeseen problems.

Mission Statement

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Athletic Department is committed to provide a competitive and inclusive sports program that promotes physical and mental development and well-being for all student-athletes.

Philosophy

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf expects its student-athletes to have such attributes as dedication, self-sacrifice, and the sincere desire to be the best athletes possible, 365 days of the year. These people should have great pride in their school, the athletic program, and above all, in themselves! All of those involved with any part of the athletic program should conduct themselves in a manner which sets an example for the younger people in our community. They should have a thorough understanding of the rules, regulations, requirements, and standards which make up our athletic program.

Participation in Athletics

WPSD offers a comprehensive program in Athletics. Participation in sports is a privilege. The responsibilities of the student-athletes are greater than those of other students. Students must maintain good grades and demonstrate proper classroom and dormitory behavior in order to participate in team sports.

If a student is suspended in or out of school, sports participation is suspended for the length of the suspension. Serious infractions or repeated misbehavior can result in removal from the team.

Education is the main goal at WPSD. Beginning on September 8th and then again 3 weeks after the start of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th 9-week, any student receiving a grade of below 70% in any courses will be immediately put on academic probation. Student-athletes will not be able to dress in uniform for home athletic games or travel to away games for two weeks. We will continue to evaluate academic performance at two-week intervals. Students will still be required to participate in practices and be with the team during home games.

DATE OF GRADE CHECKS:

1 st 9-week	2 nd 9-week	3 rd 9-week	4 th 9-week
Thurs., Sept. 12	Thurs., Nov. 14	Thurs., Feb. 13	Thurs., April 30
Thurs., Sept. 26	Thurs., Dec. 5	Thurs., Feb. 27	Thurs., May 14
Thurs., Oct. 10	Thurs., Dec. 19	Thurs., March 12	Thurs., May 28
Fri., Oct. 25	Fri., Jan. 24	Fri., April 3	Fri., June 12

At the end of the two-week window, if a student-athlete raises his/her average to 70% or better, the probation is lifted and he/she will be able to participate in home and away games.

Any student that earns below a 2.0 GPA at the end of any nine-week grading period will immediately be put on academic probation for five (5) weeks. Student-athletes will not be able to dress in uniform for home athletic games or travel to away games until the fifth week of the new quarter. Students will still be required to participate in practices and be with the team during home games.

Any proposed short- or long-term suspension would necessitate a review meeting with the Director, Principal, Dean of Students and Athletic Director.

Age Eligibility

A student who became nineteen years old on July 1st or after is eligible to participate in all sports in that school year. If a student became nineteen prior to July 1st, he/she shall be ineligible for athletic competition in that school year with the exception of cheerleading and softball. As for the Middle School team, a student who became fifteen years old on July 1st or after is eligible to participate in all sports in the SWCAC league.

Parental Consent

Each athlete shall have his/her parents complete the "Parental Consent/Coaches' Letter" Form. Signing the form will authorize the following:

- A) Permit your son/daughter to participate in all sports that year;
- B) Authorize the student to accompany any school team of which he/she is a member on any of its local or out-of-town trips (another letter will be sent out for each specific weekend trip);
- C) Allow the school to obtain, through a physician of its own choice, any emergency medical care that may become reasonably necessary for the student in the course of such athletic activities or such travel.

Fees

A \$10.00 fee per student-athlete will cover the 2019-20 year. This fee is to be paid prior to the beginning of the sport year.

Physical Examinations

A yearly physical examination, signed by your family doctor attesting that your child has been examined and is physically fit for athletic completion, is required prior to participation in a team sport. This includes all related team practices. Also, the "Consent for Treatment" form must be handed in prior to the student's participation. There will be no more "mini-physicals". The physical examination covers all sports for the entire school year provided the examination occurs after July 1st of the previous academic year. WPSD is adhering to the PIAA (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association) guidelines pertaining to sports physicals. The Health Center should be contacted if questions arise in this area.

Concussion Forms

A student-athlete desiring to participate in any athletic activity and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall, each school year, sign and return to the school an acknowledgement of their receipt and review of concussion and traumatic brain injury information.

All medical personnel, authorized to make decisions on when the student-athlete can return to play must complete, or have completed, training in the evaluation and management of concussion. Material for this training is available on-line through the Pennsylvania Departments of Education or Health (www.state.pa.us) and through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov).

Authority is granted to game officials, Athletic Director, the coaches, athletic trainer, licensed physician, licensed physical therapist or other individual trained in the recognition of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and designated by the school, to determine that a student-athlete exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion or traumatic brain injury.

Once the student-athlete has exhibited signs or symptoms of a concussion/traumatic brain injury, he/she must be removed by the coach from participation. The student-athlete cannot return to practice or play until the student-athlete is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional (as defined in the Safety in Youth Sports Act) with training in the evaluation and management of concussion.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Forms

A student-athlete desiring to participate in any athletic activity and the student's parent or guardian shall, each school year, sign and return to the school an acknowledgement of their receipt and review of the warning signs information sheet.

Authority is granted to game officials, Athletic Director, the coaches, athletic trainer, licensed physician, licensed physical therapist or individually trained in recognizing the warning signs and symptoms to determine that a student-athlete exhibits signs of cardiac arrest.

Once the student-athlete had exhibited any warning sign, he/she must be removed from the activity. The student-athlete cannot return to practice or games until cleared for return in writing by an appropriate medical professional.

Medical Release to Play Again

All injuries that occur while participating in athletics should be reported to the coach and Athletic Director. If the injury requires medical attention by the Health Center or hospital, it will be necessary to have an injury report form completed by the coaches. If an athlete is seriously injured, he/she must have a doctor's release before he/she can practice or compete in athletic contests. The Athletic Director and coaches reserve the right to remove an injured player from a game.

Commitment to Athletic Participation

"Finishing what you start" is an important concept for our students. A student who signs up for a sport is encouraged to remain with that team until the end of the season. It also means giving 100% effort at practices and games. If a student decides to leave the team, he/she shall not participate in any other sports for one year, and at the discretion of all people involved: Athletic Director, HS Principal, and Director.

An athlete may participate in any sport(s) offered by WPSD. He/she is expected to stay on the team(s) until the season is finished. No one shall change sports without the consent of each coach involved.

Athletes are required to comply with WPSD's Code of Conduct and will receive consequences as required. Athletes are expected to demonstrate sportsmanship, respect, team pride, responsibility, positive attitude, maintain excellent academic grades, and maintain neat appearance. Any violation will result in consequences determined by the coach and the Athletic Director. Serious violations such as smoking, illegal drugs, alcohol, or fighting will result in consequences as noted in WPSD's Code of Conduct.

Equipment and Uniforms

Athletic equipment and uniforms are loaned to a team member at the start of the season. Athletic equipment and uniforms are to be used only during practice sessions and contests. With the Athletic Director's permission, Varsity level teams may wear uniform tops or game jerseys on certain game days like the first game of the season or first home game of the season or related events such as a Pep Rally.

All athletes/team members will be required to return uniforms and gear to their coaches immediately after the season is finished. Theft, loss, or damage of any equipment, gear, or uniform becomes the athlete's financial obligation. If gear or uniform is not returned, replaced, or paid for, the letter award shall not be awarded nor any gear and uniform be issued for the next sport. **Seniors will not be permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies until all athletic fees are paid and uniforms are returned.**

Practice and Game Attendance

It is the obligation and responsibility of athletes and team members to regularly attend all scheduled practices, meetings, weekend clinic, and games and to be punctual. No practices can be missed. If circumstances arise whereby an athlete cannot attend a practice or meeting, the athlete must communicate with the coach prior to the practice or meeting. On returning to practice from an absence, athletes and team members must present to the coaching staff or Dean of Students/Athletic Director an excuse slip from a doctor, nurse, faculty/staff or parent indicating the reason of absence. If an athlete arrives at school later than 11:30 a.m. on the day of a game without a legitimate excuse, participation in the sporting event or cheerleading will not be permitted. If a team member is absent from school, without a doctor's excuse or other legitimate excuse (determined acceptable by WPSD) on the day of the game, the student will not be permitted to play in a game or cheer. In addition, most coaches require a student to attend practice the day before a game.

If an athlete arrives after 10:00 a.m. on a Friday, he/she will not be permitted to participate in the weekend's games.

If an athlete decide not to participate in a clinic workshop (basketball/cheerleading and/or softball), he/she will not be permitted to participate in any tournament weekend trips; i.e., ESDAA, Ohio, Scranton, etc.), and at the discretion of Athletic Director, HS Principal, and Director.

Weight Room

Athletes may train only in the presence of the instructor, coaches, or the Athletic Department personnel. All team members must wear proper attire and work with a partner. There will be no loitering, improper conduct, horseplay, or equipment abuse during the workouts.

Personal Appearance and Conduct

Students who are members of teams that represent the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, should always dress appropriately. When students are away from the school, they are under the direct supervision of their coaches. Athletes and team members may be required to follow specific rules decided by their coaches, that are not included in this booklet. The WPSD Code of Conduct guidelines are in effect - even on the weekends. Hazing will not be tolerated. Behavior misconduct at away games could result in the loss of this privilege. If a student does not follow the personal appearance and/or conduct as described in the WPSD's Student Handbook, that student will NOT be able to participate in that day's game. Male students are expected to be clean-shaven by the beginning of the school day (8:00 a.m.) or they shall not participate in a game that day.

Any kind of head decoration, jewelry, or poorly groomed facial hair (goatee, beard, and sideburns) is not allowed at practices and games. Student-athletes/team members who do not dress appropriately for sport games will be required to change and return in more appropriate clothes. This applies to all athletic related events, including pep rallies and the Sports Banquet.

Student-athletes will, at all times, demonstrate respect for fellow team members including managers, coaches, Athletic Department personnel, other schools/team members, officials, and anyone involved in interscholastic sports. It is expected that the student-athletes will conduct themselves in a manner that will be positive for the school.

Detention Hall/Suspensions

If an athlete is assigned to detention hall or in-school/out-of-school suspension, she/he must be there. Athletes will not be excused from detention hall or in-school and out-of-school suspension even if they happen to have athletic related events during that time. Athletes will **NOT** participate in that day of the game if he/she has a Detention Hall or is in suspension. Some coaches set other criteria for participation related to detention hall and suspension. Player and Parents will be notified in advance of all specific team rules.

Sportsmanship

WPSD places a high priority on good sportsmanship. If an athlete or team member demonstrates poor sportsmanship, he/she will be prohibited from participating. Examples are complaining during the game, pointing at player(s), disrespecting and questioning officials' calls and coaches' decisions.

Cell Phones/Mobile Devices

Team members are permitted to bring any personal cell phones or mobile devices to away games/matches. These devices are not to be used during game competition at all. Coaches have the discretion to determine when cell phones/mobile devices can be used.

Jewelry and Tattoos

Jewelry (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, etc.) and/or tattoo(s) is/are not permitted to be worn during practices/games/meets. The only exception is a medical necklace/bracelet which must be taped to the body. WPSD is adhering to the National Federation of High School Sports Association guidelines.

Away Games

Coaches will select a traveling team for all away games. Not all athletes will be able to go. All athletes are to ride in WPSD-sponsored vehicles. A player may ride with his/her parents back home **after** the game, with permission from the coach and/or Athletic Director.

Out of State Trips

Student-athletes are required to have parent/guardian's permission at the beginning of that week before they are allowed to participate in competition on a weekend. No out-of-state trip is granted if the permission form has not been signed by a parent/guardian.

If a student/team member misses a school day on the Monday (or in some cases, Tuesday) after the out-of-state trip, he/she will not be allowed to play in the next 2 games unless they have legitimate excuse. Exceptions will be reviewed by Athletic Director and the High School Principal.

Locker Room and Facilities

It is the athlete's responsibility to take good care of the locker room and facilities. Athletes are to respect their own and other athletes' belongings. Immature behavior such as throwing towels or other objects is not allowed in the locker room. Graffiti or putting some kind of tape or stickers on the lockers is not permitted. All showers must be turned off after showering. Glass containers are not permitted in the locker rooms. Equipment, gear, and uniforms must be removed from the lockers at the conclusion of each sports season. Items left behind will be disposed of.

The Athletic Department is not responsible for any missing valuables, money, or personal items. It is STRONGLY recommended that you put your valuables, money, or personal items in the locker with a combination lock. Renting a locker with a combination lock will cost an athlete ten dollars (\$10.00) and when the combination lock is returned back in good condition, the \$10.00 rental fee will be returned to that athlete.

Awards Criteria

Varsity letters in all Varsity sports shall be awarded by the school upon the recommendation of the coach who shall consider the following as requirements for an award:

A player must have been regular in attendance at all practices and weekend clinics such as basketball, cheerleading, and softball.

A player shall have observed all training rules and regulations.

A player shall have conducted him/herself in a most exemplary manner both on and off the field, exhibiting good sportsmanship to the coach, teammate, and opponents.

A player shall qualify for a Varsity Letter using the following criteria:

Soccer	One period more than half of all periods played
Basketball	One quarter more than half of all games played
Cheerleading	Two years on the Varsity level
Volleyball	One game more than half of all games played
Softball	2.0 plate appearances per game

If a senior has played at least three consecutive years of the same sport.

A. A player who is dropped from any team for disciplinary reasons shall not be eligible for an award.

Managers for a Varsity sport will be awarded a Varsity letter and insert after three years of service in the same sport. LIMIT: one manager per sport

Special Awards

A. Trophies and plaques may be awarded in recognition of any outstanding athlete.

B. Final designation of award winners and special award presentations is the responsibility of the coaches. They shall be submitted to the Athletic Director within one week of the final scheduled event. The awards will be given by each coach at the Sports Banquet or Extracurricular Awards Assembly held near the end of the school year.

C. The Most Outstanding Athlete of the Year will be voted by the coaches. Criteria to be considered on the list are:

- Play and earn letters in all three sports
- Show 100% commitment and be there at all practices
- Be with team at all times and show team pride at all time
- Respect coaches, officials, teammates, all other staff members, and our opponents
- Positive attitude, responsibility, sportsmanship, neat appearance, and good leadership skills
- Participate in all sporting clinics
- statistics

Coaches will rank players in order from top down and attend all 4 meetings listed below:

- a. TBA at TBA (1 p.m.)
- b. TBA at TBA (1 p.m.)

- c. Friday, February ??, 2020 TBA (1 p.m.)
- d. Monday, May ??, 2020 at 3:15 p.m.

Closed Practice Policy

Practices, which are considered valuable instructional time, are closed to all parties with the exception of coaches, players, Athletic Director, administrators, and invited or previously approved guests. Guests must receive permission from the coach or Athletic Director well in advance (at least 24 hours in advance). Guests are expected to refrain from disrupting practice (instructional) sessions in any way, including conversing with the coach or players.

Early Departure From Class

Student-athlete/team members are responsible for making arrangements with teachers to make up class work and assignments. They are not to use athletic events as an excuse for not completing assignments or not doing quality work. If the Athletic Director is notified that an athlete has missed a homework assignment or turned in unacceptable work the following day after a game that athlete will sit out the next game.

Parent/Coach Relationship

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 students. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH

- 1) Philosophy of the coach
- 2) Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the team
- 3) Location and times of all practices and contests
- 4) Team requirements (i.e. - special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- 5) Procedures should your child be injured during practices or contests
- 6) Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

- 1) Concerns expressed directly to the coach (by appointment only)
- 2) Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- 3) Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your children become involved in the programs at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

- 1) The treatment of your child mentally and physically
- 2) Ways to help your child improve
- 3) Concerns about your child's academic progress
- 4) Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those following, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

- 1) Playing Time
- 2) Team Strategy
- 3) Play-Calling
- 4) Other Student-Athletes

There are situations that arise that may require a conference between the coach and parent. This dialogue is encouraged. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other's

position. When a conference is necessary, the following procedure should be used to help promote a resolution of the concern.

PROCEDURE TO USE IN DISCUSSING CONCERNS WITH A COACH

- Email to set up an appointment. Please keep in mind that most of our coaches are classroom teachers and contractors. The available meeting time during the academic day and daytime job outside WPSD may be limited.
- If the coach cannot be reached, please contact Valentine Wojton, III; Athletic Director at vwojton@wpsd.org
- Please do not attempt to initiate a discussion or confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. This can be an emotional time for all parties. Meetings in this setting usually do not promote resolution.

THE NEXT STEP

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THE MEETING WITH THE COACH DID NOT PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION?

- 1) Email and set an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation further with you, your son/daughter, the coach, and the Athletic Director.
- 2) At this meeting, further appropriate steps can be discussed and determined.

Research shows that participation in extra-curricular activities in high school gives a student a greater chance of success during adulthood. A recent survey of American CEOs revealed that over 40% of these individuals participated in extra-curricular activities while in high school. We are confident that the athletic program at WPSD will aid in the preparation of those students who chose to participate in our programs. We are also hopeful that the information provided in this handbook will enhance both student and parent participation in our athletic program.

Substance Abuse

Members of an athletic team will refrain from the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances (drugs) of any kind. Verification of alcohol/substance abuse will result in dismissal from the team. Student-athletes/team members will lose all rights and privileges, including any awards or post-season recognition.

The Athletic Department and coaches do **NOT** support student-athletes/team members' smoking. If any student-athletes/team members are found using tobacco, including smokeless tobacco, disciplinary action will be taken. This includes suspension from suiting up for games up to suspension/dismissal from the team. Repetitive smoking shall result in expulsion from the team for the remainder of the season and all rights and privileges, including any awards or post-season recognition, will be lost.

Hazing

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf believes that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and prohibits all such activities at any time in school facilities, on school property, and at any corporation-sponsored event.

Hazing shall be defined for purposes of this policy as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes or creates a risk of causing mental, emotional, or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy. See additional information located in the WPSD School Handbook regarding hazing. A form regarding Harassment/Hazing/Bullying will be passed along to our student-athletes and they are expected to sign, along with their parent's signature and return to the Athletic Director at the beginning of the season.

Day Students

Day students are to be picked up following practices and games unless other arrangements have been made with the Dean of Students or Assistant Deans of Students.

Additions, Corrections, or Amendments to Handbook

The Athletic Director reserves the right to amend any portion of this handbook as deemed necessary.

We have read and discussed the Athletes' Guidelines. My child will be encouraged to follow all of the guidelines listed above. Our signatures below indicate that we will abide by these guidelines for the school year of 2019-20.

Parent's Signature

Student's Signature

Date

Date
