

DERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT – ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

The Derry Township School District interscholastic athletic programs will provide learning experiences in a positive environment for student-athletes while helping them achieve both their academic and athletic goals to become champions in life.

VISION

Interscholastic athletic programs provide opportunities to enhance the overall school experiences of student participants at both the Hershey Middle School and Hershey High School communities in general. First and foremost, the interscholastic athletic programs will support the academic mission of the school. Although winning is a natural goal in the pursuit of excellence, the principles of good sportsmanship take precedence and enhance the educational value of interscholastic athletics. The interscholastic athletic programs will strive for Mid Penn Conference Sportsmanship Awards and Championships as well as District 3 and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Championships.

The Derry Township School District will set high expectations for its coaches and student-athletes. We will hire and retain the best coaches who regard themselves first and foremost as teachers. It is our goal to teach respect, commitment, accountability, teamwork, sportsmanship, strong work ethic, acceptance of victory with humility, acknowledgement of defeat with grace, and the development of a positive attitude towards competition both on and off of the athletic playing fields. It is our goal that through participation in our interscholastic athletic programs, student-athletes will adopt positive lifelong habits that will enhance and enrich their daily lives now and in their future endeavors and become champions in life.

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE US

- Comply with Derry Township School District, Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, Mid Penn Conference and other governing associations' missions, policies and regulations.
- Provide a safe and positive experience that will help develop Derry Township School District students physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.
- Recognize that interscholastic athletic participation and competition is a privilege that carries definite responsibilities among student-athletes, coaches, administration and parents.
- Expect that all decisions are student-centered, positive and educationally sound.
- Provide quality athletic programs with a "student first" philosophy which outweighs the zeal to win at "any cost."
- Facilitate development of student-athletes' character traits such as resiliency, commitment, self-advocacy, sportsmanship, work ethic, teamwork, and goal setting.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn selected sports and improve playing skills to the best of their abilities to reach their potential with a goal of life-long participation in sports and other fitness-related activities.
- Provide opportunities to practice self-discipline and emotional maturity while making decisions under pressure.
- Provide properly and gender equitably resourced programs with respect to facilities, uniforms, equipment, scheduling, coaching, and administrative oversight.
- Provide opportunities to observe and exemplify good sportsmanship.
- Minimize the loss of instructional/classroom time. Consider student educational needs by keeping practices within reasonable time limits.
- Provide for balanced competition with area schools to the maximum extent possible.
- Provide for cooperation among athletic teams and among high school, middle school, and youth township programs.
- Maintain open communications and collaboration within and among athletic programs. Encourage multiple-sport athletes.
- Recognize the differences in the physical, mental and emotional maturity of students, particularly during their middle school years.
- Emphasize participation above winning at the middle school level.
- Promote and resource, within budgetary constraints, coaching professional development, student-athlete leadership workshops, and parent-focused educational presentations.

STUDENT-ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Athletes must be leaders of both our school and our local communities. We expect our student-athletes' leadership and behavior to be extremely positive. Student-athletes will recognize that they are ambassadors for our schools and our community. Spectators will form long lasting opinions about our school and community based upon their observations of the behavior and actions of our student-athletes, coaches and parents at sporting events.

1. Student-athletes are students first and as such will:
 - maintain academic eligibility in accordance with PIAA regulations and DTSD Academic Standards;
 - work to the best of their ability in all assigned classes;
 - be on time for all classes;
 - respect all teachers and classmates;
 - respond to all requirements of each class;
 - complete all required work on time;
 - never use athletics as an excuse for lack of preparation or performance in the classroom; and
 - maintain these standards throughout the school year, not only during their season(s) of competition.

2. Each member of any team is required to make a commitment to that sport during the season. That commitment involves being at every scheduled practice and contest throughout the season. Unexcused absence from scheduled practices or contests and lateness to practice affects the entire team. These and other infractions of team expectations/rules may result in the loss of playing time, removal of designation as team captain, or other coach-imposed consequences. Extreme/severe violations of team or school rules may be dealt with by the athletic director and/or school administration.

3. The following expectations shall be followed at all times:
 - Student-athletes are role models for younger students and are expected to accept the responsibilities that accompany this privilege, including an obligation to be drug and alcohol free on a year round basis.
 - Always be humble in victory and gracious in defeat.
 - Respect officials, opponents, teammates and coaches. Treat others with dignity and respect and as you wish to be treated.
 - Communicate directly with your coach if you have any questions/concerns.
 - Respect team managers as important members of the team.
 - Never use illegal tactics or profanity.
 - Know and obey the specific training and practice rules of your coach.
 - Understand that harassment/bullying/hazing/initiations/intimidation of any type will not be tolerated. Offenders will be subject to legal

consequences, school discipline, and removal from the team as determined by team coaches and school administration.

- Understand that behavioral infractions of the school discipline code will be referred to the school administration. Disciplinary consequences will be based upon the severity/degree of the infraction and will be progressive in nature.
- Display appropriate safety behavior in the locker rooms, training room, shower areas, practice areas and on school transportation (buses and vans).
- Be responsible for all issued equipment and uniforms. All issued equipment and uniforms must be returned at the conclusion of each season and prior to joining another team.
- Keep the locker room and training room neat by disposing of all waste and trash and placing all equipment in its proper storage area prior to departing the facility. Respect all athletic facilities. Leave your area better than you found it.
- Understand that any athlete who quits a team after the season starts (after the first game or match is played) is not permitted to start practicing or attending open gym/field sessions with another team until the season is concluded for the first team, unless there is a mutual agreement between the two head coaches and the athletic director

4. Student-athletes are required to adhere to the team rules and expectations established by the head coach of his/her program, as approved by the athletic director. Violations of these rules and expectations will be handled at the discretion of the coach, unless they are a violation of the school code. Violations of the school code will be handled by school administration. In the case of repeated violation of team rules, insubordination, or violations of the school code, the student-athlete may be suspended from participation or removed from the program/team at the administration's discretion and with parental notification.

TASK EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES

The function of a coach is to educate student-athletes properly through participation in interscholastic athletic participation. The interscholastic athletic program is designed to enhance academic achievement and student development. Coaches will comply with the following expectations:

- Respect and dignify each student-athlete as an individual.
- Adhere to all DTSD policies, PIAA Rules and Regulations, Mid Penn Conference Rules and Hershey High School Regulations at all times.
- Be thoroughly acquainted with the contest rules and be responsible for their interpretation to the athletes. The coach shall not try to seek an advantage by circumventing the intent or the spirit of the rules.
- Promote the academic mission of Derry Township School District.
- Complete all required annual coaching training requirements to include sudden cardiac arrest and concussion training.
- Accept role as mandated reporters and as such will complete all state- mandated training to comply with Act 126.
- Work closely with the school athletic trainers in prevention and treatment of injuries. The athletic trainer and school physicians, in coordination with the family physician, have final say on return-to-play decisions.
- Coordinate ImPact training with the athletic trainer, for applicable sports, for all student-athletes in their program(s).
- Completely uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with student-athletes, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school association, the media and the public, the coach will set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- Create and maintain a safe environment and promote the health and safety of all student-athletes at all times.
- Take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse and under no circumstances authorize their use.
- Establish team expectations and rules prior to the start of the season and communicate these with the student-athletes and their parents both verbally and in writing at a pre-season meeting. The parent meeting should include a review of the team expectations and rules, practice and game schedule, and any other issues as deemed appropriate by the coach. The meeting shall be confirmed with the athletic director when scheduled and when completed.
- Be responsible for and maintain an accurate inventory of all school equipment and uniforms. As requested by the athletic director, submit a budget request for the following school year. Submit team report at the conclusion of each season to include awards and team accomplishments in a timely fashion.
- Assist with post-secondary planning for individual student-athletes when possible and appropriate.
- Collaborate with the coaching staff to make decisions for sports which require "cutting of the team" due to budgetary and/or safety considerations, with fairness and team success as the primary

considerations. Use of an assessment rubric is REQUIRED.

PHILISOPHICAL EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES

Coaches have a tremendous influence, either positive or negative, on the education of student-athletes, and thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character and shall always demonstrate the highest degree of ethical and moral character. Coaches will be teachers first by committing themselves to the personal development and well-being of our student-athletes. Those who participate at all levels will learn the benefits of teamwork, discipline, goal setting, physical fitness, healthy lifestyles, character development, self-confidence, sportsmanship, and an appreciation for lifelong learning. Therefore, coaches are expected to implement the following philosophical ideals:

- Support all student-athletes in their program with positive encouragement and promote enjoyment through hard-work, commitment, dedication, team work and skill development.
- Include meaningful voluntary service learning activities/opportunities in their program to give back to the community and to provide opportunities for team building experiences that are both healthy and productive.
- Foster student leadership and servant leadership.
- Foster a positive team culture and climate conducive to inclusion and free of harassment.
- Establish team time requirements with consideration for academic requirements and family responsibilities.
- Promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct their program in harmony with the total school program.
- Promote within a team/program a sense of membership among student-athletes and coaching staffs.
- Encourage student-athletes to engage in their school experience in a balanced manner by fostering their interests and participation in other activities. Speak positively about other sports, school clubs and activities.
- Understand and respect the priority that all in-season sports enjoy. In- season teams take precedence over out-of-season voluntary workouts.
- Actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship by their spectators, working closely with the cheerleaders, booster clubs, sponsors and the administration.
- Refrain from conduct that will incite player or spectators against contest officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- Meet and exchange friendly greetings with rival coaches before and after contests to set the correct tone for the event.
- Be accessible to parents to discuss their individual child's concerns in accordance with the Parent/Coach Communication Plan.
- Develop connections and positive relationships with the players and maintain continuous communications with them to contribute to their individual development. Be accessible and approachable with players and parents.
- Maintain communications with the athletic director and game managers and be proactive in communicating concerns related to the team/program.

- Conduct out-of-season optional and open workouts for interested student-athletes as time and facilities permit.
- Integrate the high school program with the middle school and Derry Township teams for their sport. The varsity head coach should oversee the entire program for the middle school and high school.
- Engage in ongoing sport-specific and fitness-related professional development.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/guardians desire the best opportunities for their student-athletes and therefore have a very influential role in the student-athlete's attitude towards the athletic team. Interscholastic involvement is far more likely to be a rewarding experience when the parents/guardians are supportive of the student-athlete's participation through positive involvement in the booster club and similar activities. Participation in DTSD interscholastic athletic programs is a privilege. All stakeholders have responsibilities which accompany student-athlete participation. Parents/guardians are expected to comply with the following guidelines:

- Encourage self-advocacy with their student-athlete and encourage their student-athlete to self-advocate by meeting with the coach to express concerns.
- Support their student-athlete's efforts for success. Emphasize a "team over self" philosophy and appreciate that all players' roles are important to the success of any team.
- Become familiar with and review the DTSD Athletic Philosophy, expectations and team rules with their student-athlete.
- Treat coaches, officials, parents and players with respect. Insist that their student-athlete does the same.
- Make every effort to attend parent meetings and other team-supportive activities.
- Assure that their student-athlete attends all scheduled practices and contests.
- Acknowledge and support the ultimate authority of the coaching staff to determine playing time, player selection and strategy.
- Promote and model sportsmanlike behavior at all DTSD sporting events. Do not coach from the sideline.
- Work closely with the coaches, guidance counselors, and school personnel to identify reasonable and realistic post-secondary plans for your student-athlete.
- Support your student-athlete's development by teaching him/her respectful behavior while handling frustrations. Promote the understanding that what is best for the team trumps the student-athlete's personal best interest.
- Behave in a positive manner toward student-athletes, opponents, coaches, officials and other fans. Refrain from any derogatory behavior against such participants at all times.
- Help their student-athletes focus on what is in their control such as fitness level, skill development, attitude, effort and contributions to the team.
- Never criticize physical and mental mistakes in games. Players know what mistakes they make on the field of play.

PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION PLAN

Parenting and coaching are both extremely challenging undertakings. As parents and coaches become more aware of each other's roles and responsibilities, all of our student-athletes benefit. When a student-athlete becomes involved in our interscholastic athletic program, parents have a right to understand what expectations are placed on him/her. This understanding is facilitated by clear communication between parents and the student-athlete's coaches.

Research indicates that athletes involved in co-curricular activities have a greater chance for success in school and during adulthood. Many of the character traits developed as a successful athlete can also promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided here helps to make the experience with the DTSD athletic program less stressful and more enjoyable for both student-athletes and parents.

Communication parents should expect from the student-athlete's coach:

- Expectations the coach has for the student-athlete as well as all the players on the team
- Location and times of all practices and contests
- Team requirements, i.e., pre-season meetings, practice times, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning
- Lettering policy
- Discipline that may result in the denial of the student-athlete's participation
- Procedures for contacting the head coach

Communication Chain of Command

- Student-Athlete/Coach
- Student-Athlete/Coach/Parent
- Student-Athlete/Coach/Parent/Athletic Director
- Student-Athlete/Coach/Parent/Athletic Director/High School Principal

Communication that coaches should expect from parents:

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach, ideally after the athlete has already expressed the concern with the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflict well in advance

If a student becomes involved with the athletic programs of DTSD, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his/her life. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not happen the way a parent or student-athlete wishes. If this occurs, parents and students are encouraged to pursue the communication chain of command outlined above.

Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches:

- The treatment of the student-athlete
- Ways to help the student-athlete improve
- The student-athlete's attitude, work ethic, eligibility
- Concerns about the student-athlete's behavior

Issues not appropriate for parents to discuss with coaches:

- The performance of other student-athletes
- Team strategy, justification of playing time, technique, practice-organization, or play selection

Parents may become concerned that their student-athlete is not playing as much as they may hope. Parents must understand that coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all student-athletes involved. Clearly, certain aspects of participation can and should be discussed with a student-athlete's coach, per the established communication chain of command. Discussions and concerns shared between athletes/coaches/parents shall remain private and not be used against student-athletes.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent, and such conferences 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 issues or concern.

Procedure for parents to follow if there is a concern to discuss with a coach:

- Please encourage the student-athlete to speak directly with the coach. Often, concerns can be resolved at this level.
- Contact the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, contact the high school athletic director. He/she will assist you in arranging a meeting.
- Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of concerns.

If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call to schedule an appointment with the athletic director and/or the building principal to discuss the situation.