

Windsor Middle School

HANDBOOK
FOR
PARENTS OF ATHLETES



2017-2018

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Handbook for Parents of Athletes

Being a parent is often challenging. This effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility.

There are many relationships which are involved in being the parent of an athlete.

The Player-Coach Relationship:

Unfortunately, through televised games and the more recent proliferation of cable TV, many adults feel that they understand or perhaps know more than many coaches. Everyone becomes an expert. While this newfound expertise may heighten your appreciation of a sport, as a parent, however, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Unfortunately, a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a decided effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in the presence of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect his or her playing time or even winning a starting position.

The Parent-Coach Relationship:

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his or her players. These brief meetings are essential to

the learning process involved in athletics. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games.

The Parent-Player:

Some parents may try to live through their child’s athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

When you do speak with your child after a contest, don’t dwell on his or her play, how many points they scored or if they started. Instead, first ask how the team did? Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100% and have a good experience?

Relationships with Officials:

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans. “How much are you paying the officials?” The home school does not solicit the officials. The commissioner of the particular sport assigns all officials and neither team has control of which officials are assigned.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls (who does?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

Weld RE-4 School District Mission Statement for Athletics

The Weld RE-4 School District supports the philosophy that a quality interscholastic athletic program is vital to the positive social, physical, and educational development of students. The interscholastic athletic program enhances and supports the academic mission of the school system. We are committed to promoting the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play at all athletic contests. We support high standards of good citizenship and propriety, along with regard for the rights of others.

Being a member of the interscholastic program is a privilege to be earned and maintained throughout the season. Each time participants step into a school or onto the practice field and anytime they participate in a game they are expected to represent themselves, and their family, team and school in a responsible, sportsmanlike manner.

We continue to build on the mission statement:

“We will provide experiences outside of the traditional classroom situation which will stimulate the growth of our students and athletes, allowing them to achieve personal and team success.”

At Windsor Middle School:

In addition to embracing and committing to the Weld RE-4 School District philosophy, at Windsor Middle School, we will also encourage and promote:

- The belief that athletes should participate in multiple sports and not specialize in any one specific sport.
- The concept of the broadest-based participation possible by offering all of the teams which we can, and extending the opportunity to participate to as many students as possible.
- The premise that all teams are considered vital for our student-athletes and each is a valued part of our athletic program. No one sport is considered more important than any other.
- The approach that all teams are treated as fairly as possible.

Athletic Chain of Command/Communication

At Windsor Middle School, the following chain of communication is in effect:

Player
Assistant Coach
Head Coach
Athletic Director
Principal
Superintendent

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she would then go to the head coach, etc. The athletics director will facilitate any meeting that is needed, but only after the appropriate chain of communication has been adhered to.

Expressing Concerns

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

- Never approach a coach immediately after a contest. We follow the 24-hour rule which prohibits any communication between a parent-coach that is not intended to be positive. This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team. Please adhere to the rule! Actions that show disregard for this rule may cause the athletic department to take actions barring the offender from attending any contest.
- Call the following day and make an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
- Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.
- Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation which is given.



Sportsmanship

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others – players, coaches, officials and fans. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. This means:

- There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from our fans or spectators.
- Taunting or trash talking of our opponents cannot and will not be tolerated.
- Spectators cannot leave the bleachers or enter onto the court or field during a contest.
- Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.

Sportsmanship for the Athlete

- We will adhere to all league and state ejection rules for contests and will allow coaches to make judgments on egregious violations of conduct policies.
- An athlete who is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct or fighting will not be allowed to participate in the next game.
- A substitute who leaves the team bench and enters the playing area during a fight will be ejected.
- The second time an athlete is disqualified in the same sport or any other sport during the school year, the offender will be immediately dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. Interscholastic participation by such individuals in subsequent school activities may be jeopardized and will be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- An ejection or disqualification prevents a player from attending the next regularly scheduled contest as a uniformed team member. The offender is expected to show support and continue their role as a contributing team member, including attending any scheduled event during the suspension period, travelling with the team, etc.
- Any player who physically assaults an official, coach, player or spectator shall be immediately dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season and may be subject to criminal charges pending an investigation.

Responsibilities of an Athlete

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

- The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual.
- An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This may also include weekend and holiday periods.
- Players must be receptive to coaching.
- Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
- As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff and the school.
- If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to a member of the coaching staff. It is vital that treatment is received and the proper rehabilitation program is followed in all treatment of injuries. If a coach is not made aware of an injury or medical condition that can severely injure or harm an athlete, the ability for the coach to help protect that student/athlete is greatly impacted.

Responsibilities of a Coach

At Windsor Middle School, a coach has the responsibility for the following:

- The selection of the squad(s).
- The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
- The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
- The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
- The decision of who plays in what position.
- The establishing of team rules.
- The selection of team captains.
- The communication with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when the sessions will start and finish

Eligibility Requirements for Athletes

Students must be passing a minimum of 6 classes each week in order to be eligible to compete. Any student falling below this benchmark will be deemed ineligible for competition occurring during that week (Monday-Saturday). Additionally, students not passing at least 6 classes in the semester preceding the competitive season will not be able to regain their eligibility during the first 9 weeks of the current semester.

Participation on an Athletic Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at Windsor Middle School is a privilege and not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to be successful, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

Selecting (Cutting) the Team

While our ultimate goal is to promote the greatest athletic participation possible at Windsor Middle School, it may be necessary in some sports or activities to cut members of a squad. This may occur due to limitations of our facilities, regulations specific to some sports, travel restrictions, and other factors.

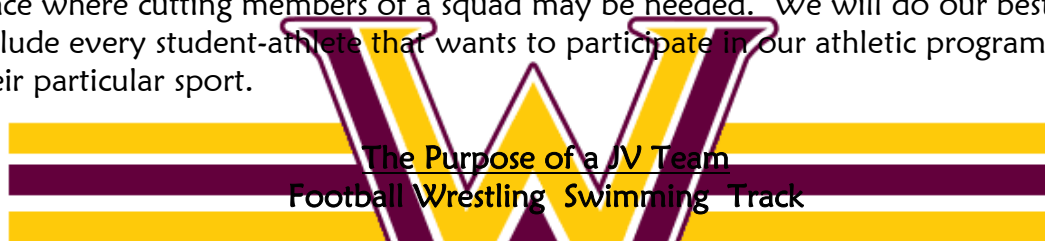
Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach. A copy of the written criteria is then distributed to our athletes prior to the tryouts and to our parents at our pre-season meetings.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year does not ensure that an athlete will make the squad at a certain level.

Parents should expect that every candidate is treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to try out again next season or to try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

We have very few activities at Windsor Middle School that may have limitations in place where cutting members of a squad may be needed. We will do our best to include every student-athlete that wants to participate in our athletic programs in their particular sport.



JV Teams exist to provide those athletes who are unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on a JV team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity squad. The athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year.

Striving to win is important in athletics. However, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV squad, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team.

Practice Sessions and Games

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real,

quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

At Windsor Middle School, practice sessions:

- May last two and one half hours.
- May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. Check with the coach for the specific times.
- Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
- Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
- May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.

Spectators at games, however, are very much encouraged. Positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance in athletic contests.

Hazing/Bullying

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an important activity for team bonding. However, it is actually a form of harassment and/or bullying and represents a WMS Code of Conduct offense. A more complete explanation of harassment and bullying can be found in the WMS Student Handbook.

Hazing, therefore, cannot and will not be condoned or permitted in the athletic program at Windsor Middle School. This means on the field or courts, in the locker rooms, on the bus, or at any other activity in which athletes represent Windsor Middle School.

Abusive Substance Avoidance Pledge

The following is the pledge that our student-athletes are expected to honor and follow at Windsor Middle School:

In all aspects of a student's life, Windsor Middle School's primary concern is for the student's health and safety. It is expected that an athlete will refrain from smoking or using chewing tobacco products, using illegal drugs, drinking alcoholic beverages, or abusing prescription and non-prescription drugs and/or performance-enhancing substances. These substances might include over-the-counter diet pills, caffeine pills, creatine, steroids, inhalants and human growth hormones.

As an athlete at Windsor Middle School, I pledge to abide by these expectations. Furthermore, I understand that my failure to follow these guidelines can result in possibly being suspended or removed from the team.

Risks of Athletic Participation

In spite of protective equipment, and the supervision and sound instruction by our coaches, there are some risks associated when someone participates in athletics. Injuries in some of our activities can and do occur. In extremely rare cases, serious, life altering injuries and death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. At Windsor Middle School, we will do all that we can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes. It is equally important that all participants (parents and athletes) understand that there is no way that we can avoid all injuries that can occur throughout a sports season.

Team Travel

Teams will be transported to away contests by either Weld RE-4 buses, small vehicles or approved, private, bonded carriers. Athletes are expected to travel to and from these contests with their team on these forms of transportation.

If there is a special reason to travel with parents (rare occurrences only) an athlete must present a signed note to their coach and the athletics director detailing this situation one full day previous to the travel situation.

Before an athlete leaves an away contest with parents, the parent should make contact with the coach to indicate that they are leaving. A note must be signed each time a student rides home with their parent and may not be filled out for the entirety of a sport season. For safety and legal reasons, athletes may only leave with their parents and not with other relatives or friends. If, in the rare case, a student-athlete needs to ride home with another family, a prearranged form must be filled out one day prior to departure on the trip that is verified with the Athletics Director and Principal.

Web Page

Windsor Middle School has its own web page at the following web address: wms.weldre4.org. Please visit our site for the information that you will need in regards to schedules, game times, rosters and directions to game sites. On the following pages, you will find a copy of Windsor Middle School athletic policies for: pre- and post-practice and game responsibilities and sportsmanship expectations.

Please feel free to call (or e-mail) with your comments concerning this handbook. Hopefully, you have found it useful. You might also want to take a few minutes and share this information with your son or daughter. Have a great season!

GO WIZARDS!

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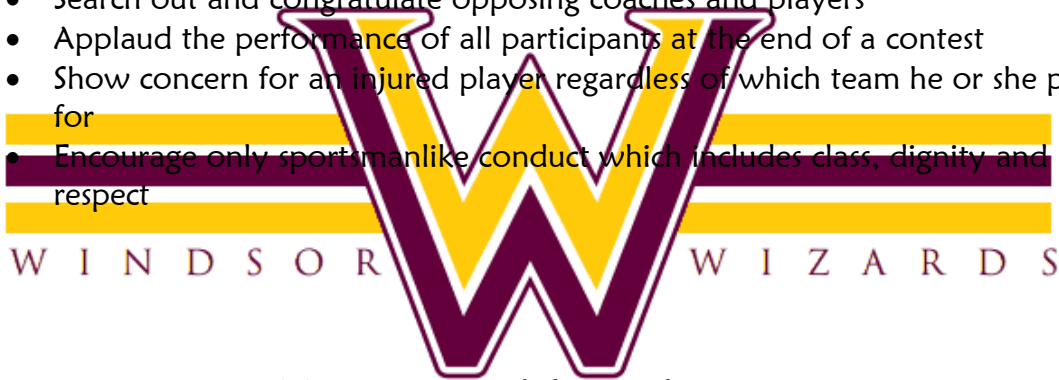


Windsor Middle School

Sportsmanship Expectations

Acceptable Behavior

- Applaud during the introduction of players, coaches and officials
- Recognize a player's performance who has fouled out with applause from both sets of fans and with a hand shake from opponents
- Accept all decisions of officials
- Follow the lead of cheerleaders in positive school cheers in a respectful manner
- Shake hands at the end of the contest between participants and coaches regardless of the outcome
- Treat the competition as a game
- Search out and congratulate opposing coaches and players
- Applaud the performance of all participants at the end of a contest
- Show concern for an injured player regardless of which team he or she plays for
- Encourage only sportsmanlike conduct which includes class, dignity and respect



Unacceptable Behavior

- Performing disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures
- Booing or heckling an official's decision
- Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official's call
- Yelling anything that might antagonize the opponents
- Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances
- Blaming loss of game on official, coaches or participants
- Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent
- Using profanity or displays of anger that draws attention away from the game

Windsor Middle School

Athletic Department

Pre- and Post-Practice and Game Responsibilities

Student-athletes waiting in the lobby pose potential problems at Windsor Middle School. Risk of injury, property damage and disruption of meetings can possibly result from unsupervised gatherings and activities. In part to address this issue, the following guidelines will be used.

The **coach** is responsible to:

- Supervise the locker room while the athletes change
- Secure all equipment, locker rooms and gymnasiums
- Supervise the lobby area and hallways until the last athlete's transportation has arrived and he/she leaves Windsor Middle School

The **Athlete** is responsible to:

- Wait in the locker room or gym hallway after school while waiting for practice sessions to begin
- Arrange in advance for the necessary transportation after all practice sessions and games
- Leave the building and grounds within a half hour after the conclusion of a contest or practice session