

# **CODE of CONDUCT for ATHLETES and ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **I. CODE of CONDUCT for ATHLETES**

The following Code of Conduct is for students' privileged to participate and be involved in our athletic program. While you participate, you are representing yourself and your school. You are an example of all that Central Bucks School District believes. All students who seek to participate in any form of athletic activities must strictly comply with the Code of Conduct for Athletes. This does not supersede the "Student Discipline" as stated in the Central Bucks Student Handbook and found in school board [Policy 218](#). Rather, it is a Code that will be used by coaches to insure that all students involved in activities are treated uniformly. Each program may establish additional rules, which apply specifically to that program. The rules and regulations in this code shall apply to any on or off school premises violation and/or adjudication during the season. It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with and follow the guidelines in this code. The opportunity to participate in a school activity is a privilege, not a right. A student who violates the Code of Conduct can lose this privilege. Please read the entire code of conduct for athletes found in [Policy 122](#).

## **II. ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **1. General Information**

It is our hope that you, as a student-athlete, recognize your position as a role model in your community. At no time in your life will you be under closer scrutiny. Take on the challenge and represent yourself, your family, and your school with dignity and honor.

The athlete/parent handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of state and local regulations governing interscholastic athletics. It is hoped that by being aware of rules, regulations, and expectations that unfortunate situations can be avoided. We require that both the student-athlete and parent read this handbook and then both sign online with Family ID. This must be completed for each sport for which a student-athlete registers.

This handbook is not all-inclusive. Many rules and regulations are not included here and, of course, each coach has the right to make reasonable rules that are more stringent than those listed.

The Department of Athletics is excited to have you participate in interscholastic athletics. Central Bucks has a rich and strong tradition in athletics. We are pleased that you have chosen to be a student-athlete.

### **2. 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, death could also result. All athletes and parents need to be aware and understand this possibility. The Central Bucks Athletic Departments will do all that they can to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our athletes.

### **3. Participation on an Athletic Team**

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team in Central Bucks 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 win, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

#### **4. “Cutting” the Team**

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his/her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach. 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 team the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the team. 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 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.

#### **5. Purpose of a JV Team**

JV teams exist to provide those athletes unable to participate on the varsity level 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 team 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 team. The athlete’s 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.

#### **6. Team Captains**

There may be several good reasons for having captains of a team. These athletes may serve as positive role models, links between the team and the coach, and they certainly should be leaders. A good captain can be a real asset to the team and coaching staff. While some coaches may allow their team to select captains, the ultimate responsibility lies with the coach. The decision to have or not have team captains will be the sole responsibility of the coach. It is also important to understand that serving in the capacity of a captain is not reserved solely for seniors on a team, but rather this position is for the athlete who is best suited to filling the responsibilities.

#### **7. Physical Examination**

No student is eligible to participate in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages and/or contests unless the student has completed a comprehensive initial pre-participation physical evaluation (“CIPPE”) performed by an authorized medical examiner, and the authorized medical examiner has completed the PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical (“CIPPE”).

Wrestlers must also obtain from a physician, prior to beginning practice, a certification of the minimum weight class at which they may wrestle for the entire season.

Any student who previously participated in PIAA Interscholastic athletic competition pursuant to a CIPPE; and is seeking to participate in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and/or contest in subsequent sport(s) in the same school year, must, not earlier than six weeks prior to the first practice day of the next sport season, complete and turn in to that student’s athletic director the recertification by Parent/Guardian section of the CIPPE form.

If a student is injured in a sport season or has checked yes on any of the Supplemental Health History questions, recertification by completing Section 8 of the CIPPE form (“Re-certification”) by a licensed physician will be required prior to participation.

In all cases, the medical professional must have signed the PIAA CIPPE FORM with appropriate date. The CIPPE may not be authorized earlier than June 1 and effective, regardless when performed during the school year until the next May 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **8. Attendance**

You cannot participate or compete on a day in which you are absent or suspended. School related functions are not considered an absence. On any given day, high school students must be in attendance for at least two full class periods. Middle School students must be in attendance for at least four full class periods. You must be regularly enrolled in your school and in full-time attendance there. You are eligible only at the school at which you are enrolled. If you are absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days, you lose your eligibility until you have been in attendance for a total of 45 school days following your 20th day of absence.

## **9. Academic and Curriculum Requirements**

You must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by your principal as a full time curriculum. You must be passing all subjects as of every Friday during a grading period. If you fail to meet this requirement, you will be placed on probation the following week. If you fail to bring up your grade during your probation week, you will become ineligible until you are passing all subjects. You must have passed all subjects during the previous grading period, except that eligibility for the first grading period is based on your final grades from the previous school year. If you fail to meet this requirement, you will lose your eligibility to play. Any student receiving a failing or incomplete grade in any subject for the preceding quarter is ineligible for 15 school days.

## **10. Practice Sessions and Games**

Practice sessions are 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. Practice sessions may last up to three hours. An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. They may start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. Check with the coach for specific times. No practice may be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather or held when school is not in session due to inclement weather. There may be practices held on Saturdays and over holiday periods. No organized team activities should take place without the supervision of a coach from that program. Captain’s practices are strictly prohibited.

## **11. Transportation**

Student-athletes must travel to and from away contests in transportation provided by the school district. At no time will student-athletes be permitted to drive on their own or ride to or from away contests with a friend. Situations may occur where, through no attempt to circumvent this rule, a parent must drive a student-athlete. This is acceptable only through advance notice to the Athletic Director. Our coaches are instructed to deny participation to any athlete, who does not ride school transportation, unless the coach and athletic director approve the plan in advance. An email from the parent seeking permission to transport the athlete home after a contest must be received and approved by the athletic director. The email is required at least 24 hours prior to the date of the contest. The parental email should specifically

explain the hardship or reason for not traveling home with the team. This explanation may be needed in order for the athletic director to make an informed decision consistent with previous requests. Prior to leaving the contest, the coach must actually speak with the parent to confirm that he/she, and not another student or friend, is driving.

## **12. Equipment**

You are responsible for any and all equipment issued to you. You will be expected to pay for any items that you do not return. Issued equipment is for interscholastic use only. You are not to use athletic attire for physical education classes or casual wear. Secure all equipment and personal items with a lock. Any unreturned equipment will become an obligation.

## **13. Dress Code**

Coaches reserve the right to set acceptable standards for student-athletes. As a representative of the Central Bucks Schools and community you should attempt to look your best.

## **14. Transfers**

Central Bucks School District Athletic Departments follow all PIAA rules and regulations regarding transfers. If you are a transfer student, you must schedule an appointment with your athletic director prior to trying out for any sport. PIAA transfer rules will be explained by the athletic director at this meeting.

## **15. Ejection from an Athletic Contest**

A ~~coach~~ or student athlete removed from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct (this includes pregame or postgame unsportsmanlike conduct) will receive a mandatory, minimum one game suspension effective the next scheduled contest. The athlete will not be able to attend the suspended game as per PIAA rules. An ejection or disqualification prevents a player from attending the regularly scheduled contest. This includes riding the bus, the locker room, the sidelines, the bench, ~~the stands~~, or anywhere on the contest site. The principal, athletic director and the disqualified party must conference and sign off on any additional actions taken as a school for the disqualification. Any subsequent disqualifications will result in further disciplinary action which may include termination from the team. Any player who physically assaults an official, coach, player or spectator will receive at minimum suspension but may include termination from the team. 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.

The Central Bucks School District promotes good sportsmanship by student athletes, coaches, and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Profanity, racial or sexist comments or other intimidating actions at officials, student-athletes or team representatives will not be tolerated. Individuals making such remarks may be removed from the site of competition. Central Bucks School District reserves the right to restrict or prohibit spectators from contests based on past behaviors.

## **16. Letter Awards**

To earn letters a student-athlete must complete the season, including post-season play-offs, unless injury prevents participation. All athletes must participate in the required contests. The Coach and Athletic Director will determine the necessary criteria for earning a varsity letter. Additional requirements

include; punctual attendance of practice and games, observation of training rules, good sportsmanship, conforming to eligibility requirements, and maintaining care of issued equipment.

## **17. Administrative Policy for Safe-Keeping of Student Property during Athletic Practices and Events**

- Avoid bringing valuables with you to athletic practices and contests.
- All student athletes trying out for sports teams should buy a lock for their locker. Student athletes may use their regular gym locker until team lockers have been assigned. These locks may not be left on the long lockers overnight!
- All student athletes are responsible for securing their valuables in a locker prior to practice or games. Please be advised that if you come to practice after it has started, liability prevents the coach from leaving practice to secure your valuables. Valuables left unsecured will be at risk. Take them to practice!
- Any theft of team equipment or personal belongings must be reported immediately to the Athletic Director and security.
- Do not depend on other schools to secure your valuables. When traveling, take only the basics and keep your valuables safe!
- Central Bucks School District is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

## **18. College Recruitment**

Student-athletes should contact the coach or Athletic Office if contacted personally by a college recruiter. We will be happy to assist in the process of recruitment. The Guidance Department should be contacted and advised regularly when colleges contact you. Check with your counselor concerning academic requirements of these institutions of higher education.

## **19. Team-Building versus Hazing**

The Central Bucks School District believes that students must be protected from hazing and/or initiation ceremonies.

All verbal, written, or physical conduct, which harasses, humiliates, persecutes students, or disrupts or interferes with any student's curricular or extracurricular experiences shall not be tolerated. In particular, coaches will communicate and enforce the following:

- Any student who is found, after investigation, to have engaged in hazing of any student, or the filing of false charges, shall be subject to disciplinary actions up to including expulsion.
- Any student who witnesses or has knowledge of hazing activities and fails to report such actions shall also be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions through Policy 247.

It is important for student-athletes to understand the difference between team-building and hazing activities:

**Team-Building:** activities designed to enhance task and social cohesion, enhance success by minimizing conflict and create a healthy team culture. Team building activities can be fun or developmental in nature.

- Cohesion is the tendency of a group to stick together and remain united while pursuing goals and objectives (Carron et al.; 1998).

- Culture is the expression of a team's values, attitudes, and beliefs about sports and competition (Taylor; 2013).
- Examples of Positive Team Building Activities: team dinners, movie nights, ropes courses, whitewater rafting, camping trips, karaoke, team challenges, problem solving activities, etc.

**Hazing:** is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization (CBSD Board Policy 247).

Hazing by definition is an activity where a high-status member orders other members to engage in or suggests that they engage in behavior that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist because s/he wants to gain admission into a group (<http://hazing.hanknuwer.com/>).

- Endangering mental health shall include forced conduct which may result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual.
- Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates.
- **Hazing is against the law!** The Pennsylvania Anti-Hazing Bill, passed in the summer of 2016, states middle and high school students involved in the hazing of peers can be criminally charged.

## **20. The Player/Coach Relationship and its Connection to the Parent/Coach Relationship\***

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Players must be receptive to coaching. The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual. A parent can have a profound effect on this very important and delicate relationship. If you express a negative opinion in front 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. While a parent may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when to express feelings can have a decided effect upon the player/coach 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 their playing time or whether they win a starting position. 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.

One of the responsibilities that a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

Communication parents should expect from your child's coach:

- Team expectations.
- Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, out-of season conditioning.
- Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication coaches should expect from parents:

- Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach.

- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.

Parents can contribute to the overall positive experience that participation in school athletics offers by:

- Encouraging good sportsmanship by showing support for all players, coaches and officials.
- Participating in positive cheers that encourage all players and discourage any cheers that redirect that focus, including those that taunt and intimidate officials or opposing players and fans.
- Respecting the players, coach and other spectators by not engaging in ridicule, profanity, or physical/verbal abuse.
- Requiring a sports environment that is free from drugs and alcohol and their use at all school-sponsored events.

If your child becomes involved in the sports programs of the Central Bucks School District, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. If this occurs, you are encouraged to contact your child's coach.

If there is a concern to discuss with a coach, the procedure you should follow includes:

- Please encourage your child to speak directly with the coach.
- **Never approach a coach immediately after a contest or practice.** This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team. Call the following day and make an appointment, which is convenient for both you, the student athlete and the coach to meet.
- All meetings should be driven by mutual respect for all parties involved. The desired outcome of these meetings is for all parties to have a clear understanding around the decisions involving the student athlete. Demeaning behaviors will result in immediate suspension of the meeting.
- If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call to schedule an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

\*Resource for some wording in this section: Doylestown Athletic Association and Suburban One League Athletic Expectations