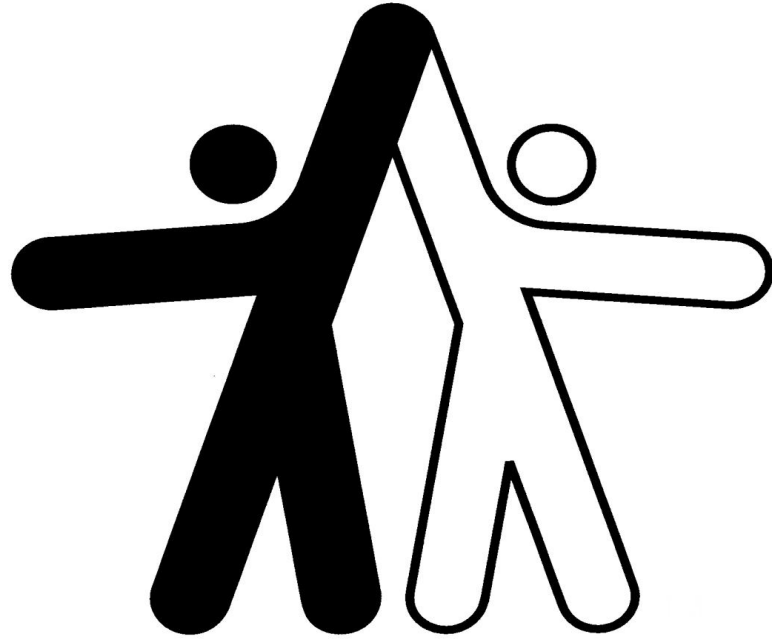


# **Good Sportsmanship**



**Harbor Springs**

**Athletics**

**The foundation  
for a  
Winning Season**

**Parent Handbook  
and Guidelines**

Dear Parents:

Participation in athletics is an excellent opportunity for your son/daughter to have many experiences that will lead to the development of life long skills and values. It is our hope that through their involvement in athletics student athletes will

- Develop a positive mental attitude and a strong sense of self.
- Promote a healthy, physically fit individual.
- Encourage participation, fair play, teamwork and sportsmanship.
- Establish and enhance life skills necessary to be successful in the adult world.

The athletic department has high expectations that are reflected with our rules and policies. I'm frequently asked why do student athletes have to follow a special set of rules and my answer is

- Being a member of an athletic team is a privilege not a right.
- They are the representatives of our community and we want them to reflect on our community in a positive manner.
- By holding student athletes to a high expectation we teach some of the elements of character that we are trying to develop.
- Being a member of an athletic team is voluntary, therefore, when you join you agreed to abide by its rules and policies.

We ask that parents try to keep this in perspective while your son/daughter is a member of an athletic team. You are not always going to agree with the coach and his/her decision, but there is an appropriate process to express your concern and I ask that you follow that process. It is important that you find out what the coaches goals, philosophy, policies rules and expectations are before the season begins. Athletes and coaches will make mistakes and when parents make comments and suggestion from the stands it can create embarrassing situations for everyone. If you have a concern with a coach look for an appropriate private opportunity to sit down and discuss your concerns. If your son/daughter is upset with the coach try to remember there are two sides of every story and encourage them to talk to the coach before getting involved.

Sportsmanship is a continuing concern at all levels of sports and fan behavior has been under serious review by the MHSAA. I feel very fortunate that for the most part Harbor Springs fans, athletes, and coaches are well behaved at sporting events and show restraint when encountering emotional situations. We have been recognized many times by the MHSAA and have received numerous awards for our sportsmanship during tournament action. We have developed a good reputation with the schools we play as having fans, coaches and athletes who are fair and know how to act at a contest. Please help keep the reputation from becoming tarnished by doing the right thing at the games you attend.

In closing I want to thank all the parents and boosters for all that you do to help make our athletic program one of the most successful in Northern Michigan. Joining one of these groups and helping out is a great way to get involved. Keep up the great work, have a great season and see you at the games.

Sincerely,

Scott Cochran  
Athletic Director

## 10 Commandments for Parents with Athletic Children

1. Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
3. Be helpful but don't coach them on the way to the gym, field, track or during breakfast and so on. It is tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advise, pep talks, and other critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, "to be out there trying" to be working to improve their skill and attitudes. Help them develop the feel for competing, for trying hard and having fun.
5. Try not to relive your athletic life through your children in a way that creates pressure, you fumbled too. You lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, you were not always heroic. Don't pressure them because of your lost pride.
6. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, attitudes of your children with other members of the team, at least within his or her hearing.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that the philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under their leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.
10. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly when a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence for fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear and discomfort. The job of a parent of an athletic children is a tough one. And it takes a lot of effort to do it well.

# Eligibility and Academic Guidelines

## Harbor Springs Athletics/Parent Coach relations

**1. Initial Eligibility:** these requirements shall be met before a student shall be permitted to participate with a team or in a co-curricular activity:

- A. All students must meet the requirements set forth by the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) and the Harbor Springs Public Schools (HSPS).
- B. In accordance with MHSAA rules, any student who fails two or more trimester classes shall be ineligible for the next trimester.
- C. Any student who fails one trimester class will not be allowed to participate in activities, games or competitions for a period of two weeks, beginning with the first game or contest. The student is required to attend practices or rehearsals leading up to and during this time.

### 2. Academic Guidelines for Student-Athletes

Most sports require that student-athletes miss class time to participate. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to communicate with teachers when absences will occur, plan ahead to make up assignments that will be missed, and to turn assignments in on time. Time management is a vital skill for student-athletes.

- A. Anticipate: look at the schedule and determine when you will miss class.
- B. Communicate: talk with your instructor—don't wait until the day before!
- C. Prioritize: plan how you will use your time in order to stay caught up.
- D. Ask for help: if you are falling behind, ask your coach for individual or team study time.
- E. Remember: academics are your first priority!

### 3. Eligibility Notification Process

Athletes, parents, and coaches will be notified within 24 hours of the student-athlete being placed on grace week by an instructor. The student-athlete needs to ask the instructor how to improve the grade to the minimum standard (at least 68%). Appeals for ineligible students will be made by the building principal.

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing and understanding each position, we are better able to accept the actions of others and provide greater benefit to the student. As parents, when your son/daughter becomes involved in our programs, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your student athlete. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the sport that your son/daughter is involved in.

#### A Addressing concerns with a coach

1. As your son/daughter becomes involved in the athletic programs at Harbor Springs, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there are also may be times when things do not go the way you or your student athlete wishes. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.
2. Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches
  - a. The treatment of your student athlete, mentally and physically
  - b. Ways to help your son/daughter improve
  - c. Concerns about your student athlete's behavior
3. It is very difficult to accept your son/daughter'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 the students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your student athletes' coach. Other things such as the following must be left to the discretion of the coach.
4. Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coaches
  - a. Playing time
  - b. Team strategy
  - c. Play calling
  - d. Other student athletes
5. When parents have a concern they should use the following process
  - a. Talk to the coach first/arrange for a meeting
  - b. If the meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, set up an appointment with the athletic director
  - c. At this meeting any further steps can be determined
6. If you have a concern to address with a coach you should follow this procedure
  - a. Never confront the coach before or after a contest or practice. Emotions are running their highest for coaches and parents and these confrontations usually result in difficult situations and bad feelings.
  - b. Call the coach and set up an appointment
  - c. If the coach cannot be reached, call the athletic director and the meeting will be set up for you.

#### B. Communication you should expect from your son/daughter's coach

1. Expectations that the coach has for your son/daughter and the team
2. Locations and times of practices, buses and games
3. Team requirements, special purchases, fundraising, out of season expectation, team and individual camps.
4. Procedures for injuries
5. Team rules, policies, guidelines, goals and philosophy
6. When and where you may contact them if you have concerns or questions

#### C. Communication coaches expect from student athletes

1. Notification of any schedule conflicts in ADVANCE. Appointments, family trips or special functions
2. Any medical issues that they should know about
3. Special concerns in regards to a coaches philosophy and or expectations

## Harbor Springs Athletic Philosophy

## So What if it's Not Fair?

### Athletic Philosophy

#### 1. Each level of programs

- a. **Middle school programs** are developmental and students are encouraged to participate. All participants will play provided that they meet all team rules, expectation including practice attendance, work ethic, attitude and school eligibility rules. **NO cutting is allowed.** "B" teams will be provided when possible to assist with the numbers. The teaching of the fundamentals of that sport is of the highest priority.
- b. **9th grade programs** are developmental and students are encouraged to participate. All participants will play provided that they meet all team rules, expectation including practice attendance, work ethic, and attitude. **NO cutting is allowed** unless there are more than 15 players and adjustments can't be made by moving players up to the JV or Varsity level.
- c. **JV programs** are developmental and cutting is only allowed when there are more students than uniforms and adjustments can't be made by moving JV players to Varsity. The primary responsibility of the JV coach is to prepare athletes for the varsity team. Coaches should balance winning with player development. To this end JV coaches should play as many athletes as possible while trying to be successful.
- d. **The Varsity program** philosophy is to make every effort to be successful without being unethical or at the expense of sportsmanship. The varsity coaches are allowed to determine the team membership and numbers that will best achieve this goal. This means they will determine what players grades 9-12 will be on the varsity team. **Cutting is allowed** as long as parents and players are aware of the process used for making the team. Varsity coaches determine the playing time of athletes based on what they believe will produce the best chances of success. Before moving a 9th or 10th grade athlete to the Varsity level parents should be consulted and it is the expectation that the athlete will receive considerable amount of playing time.

In Wisconsin, a high school girls basketball coach announced that he was quitting his job at the end of the season. He had guided his team to two state championships, but parents complained that he made some players cry.

In Virginia, another basketball coach is starting over. Shortly after she coached her girls team to the state championship, she was relieved of her duties because players, and their parents complained she was verbally abusive.

According to the unhappy player, a sport should be fun and coaches shouldn't interfere and make life miserable.

With increased frequency, the players, and their parents want to run the locker rooms.

An article is [USA Today](#) cited 11 recent cases in which high school or college coaches faced open rebellion from their players. Along with verbal abuse and making them cry, the coaches were accused of favoritism and poor communication with player and parents.

In my career as a sports parent, four of my kids were on high school athletic teams. I'm not sure how many of their coaches played favorites, I can't say whether or not they had poor relationships with the players. My communication with the coaches was pretty much limited to trying to find out what time they thought practice might end, if ever. Which doesn't mean I wasn't interested in my kids athletics.

I went to every one of their games and plenty of their practices. I sat in rainstorms and watched them roll around on muddy football fields. I stood at the edge of lumpy soccer fields and watched them kick each other in the shins. I drove through hail to find basketball courts that had no heat or zip codes. Just about the only place I never went was to the coaches office to fight my kids battles for them.

Not because I didn't care about my kids. But because I did.

My feeling was that there comes a time when parents have to let their kids learn about life. And high school sports is a great place to start. High school sports does a lot more than teach kids how to pass, punt, and dribble. It has a lot of other valuable lessons. It teaches them that not all coaches are fair. Which might ease the shock when they find out that not all bosses are fair.

It teaches them that coaches don't always have the time, or inclination to worry about whether something they say might bruise a players feelings. Which might prepare them for the world that does not always have the time, or inclination, to worry about bruising their feelings.

It teaches them that, no matter how wonderful mommy and daddy have told them they are, there are plenty of other kids just as wonderful. This might make it easier for their egos to handle the blow on the inevitable day that they discover that mommy and daddy were wrong and they are not the center of the universe after all.

Some parents feel high school sports is too early for their kids to learn lessons like those, I think it's almost too late.