

2431 ATHLETIC COMPETITION

It is the intent of the Ridgewood Board of Education to provide in the high school a comprehensive, well-planned, and well-balanced program of interscholastic athletics, including cheerleading, for girls and boys who can benefit from participation. The program shall be managed and teams coached in a manner to achieve the following objectives:

1. Promote individual and team desire for excellence while emphasizing that interscholastic sports be kept in perspective and that the first priority for all students is intellectual and emotional growth;
2. Encourage enjoyment of competition, a desire to win, and a healthy, constructive attitude toward winning and losing;
3. Develop the self-confidence and self-respect of each team member;
4. Develop the specialized talents, skills, and physical fitness of each participant;
5. Develop attitudes and skills which foster teamwork, cooperation, loyalty, and spirit; and
6. Develop the highest type of sportsmanship, sense of fair play, and respect for fellow athletes (teammates and opponents), coaches, and officials.

The Board directs the Superintendent to establish administrative procedures to carry out the intent of the above statement and to implement the provisions of this policy.

State Regulations

The conduct of interscholastic athletics shall conform to State law, New Jersey administrative code and the rules and regulations of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) which are approved annually by the Board.

Responsibility

The Athletic Director is responsible for the overall supervision of the nine through twelve interscholastic athletics program, including cheerleading. Responsibility for the supervision of the athletic program in each school is that of the Principal. In the high school, the Athletic Director will assist and advise the Principal and will have responsibility for the immediate supervision and administration of the athletic program. The Athletic Director will work closely with the high school Principal.

Continuity and Development

The Athletic Director will ensure that coaches at all levels work together to promote a developmental approach and continuity from level to level. The primary consideration in determining such things

as schedule of games, length of practices, and coaching methodology at each level shall be the physical, mental, and emotional maturity and well-being of the students.

Student Participation and Eligibility

The Board shall make school facilities, supplies, and equipment available and assign staff members for the support of a program of interscholastic athletics for students in grades nine through twelve. The Board shall maintain the program of interscholastic athletics, including cheerleading, and students who wish to participate shall pay an activity fee which shall be determined annually by the Board at its Reorganization Meeting. Students eligible for free or reduced price lunches are exempt from the activity fee. Families experiencing financial hardship should request consideration by informing the coach, the advisor, or the Building Principal. Students may be required to provide supplies in accordance with Board Policy No. 2520 on instructional supplies and students may be required to assume all or part of the costs of travel and attendance at co-curricular events and trips.

Maximum participation of girls and boys in accordance with interest, maturity, and ability to benefit is to be encouraged. A suggested range for participation in each sport is contained in the administrative procedures for this policy. The number of athletes per team is determined by the nature of the sport. Facility use, coaching personnel, budgetary constraints, and transporting students safely are contributing factors to these numbers.

Participation and eligibility will conform to the bylaws of NJSIAA. A student must be in good standing academically and as a school citizen to participate on any interscholastic team.

All students in good disciplinary and academic standing, and who have paid the activity fee (except those students who are exempt), shall have equal access to all co-curricular activities.

A student who is suspended from school is not permitted to participate in any co-curricular activity during the term of suspension. The Principal, Assistant Principal, or activity supervisor may suspend a student from participation in a co-curricular activity as a consequence of unacceptable behavior or recurring disciplinary problems.

Eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics shall require all high school students to meet, at a minimum, all the eligibility requirements of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules and Regulations of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA). Because of the diversity in the nature, intensity of student involvement, and time demands of non-athletic activities, however, it is not possible to establish uniform academic requirements. Further, the Board is aware that participation in activities often serves as an incentive and motivator for at-risk students. It is the intent of the Board that each case involving a student who is failing one or more courses or whose academic work has slipped be considered individually. A school administrator and the guidance counselor, after consultation with the student and parent shall decide whether or not it is in the student's best interest to curtail co-curricular participation. Where allowable and appropriate, the district will afford flexibility in the standards for participation in co-curricular activities.

Home schooled children are not eligible to participate in the high school interscholastic athletic program of this district.

A student in any grade must maintain a satisfactory record of attendance to be eligible for participation in the school district sponsored programs of athletic competition. The Athletic Director will determine if participation should continue.

A student who is absent for a school day may not participate in the school district sponsored programs of athletic competition the afternoon or evening of that school day.

A student who is serving an in-school or out-of-school suspension may not participate in the school district sponsored programs of athletic competition while serving the suspension.

A student in any grade who fails to observe school rules for student conduct may forfeit his/her eligibility for participation in school district sponsored programs of athletic competition.

Notice of the school district's eligibility requirements shall be available to students. Opportunity and Equity

The athletic program, including but not limited to intramural, extramural, and interscholastic sports, shall be available on an equal basis to all students regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, social or economic status. The athletic program as a whole shall be planned to insure that there are sufficient activities so that the program does not deny the participation of large numbers of students of either sex.

Required Examinations –Interscholastic or Intramural Team or Squad

Students enrolled in grades six to twelve must receive a medical examination, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.7, prior to participation on a school-sponsored interscholastic or intramural team or squad and any cheerleading program or activity.

The examination shall be conducted within 365 days prior to the first day of official practice in an athletic season with examinations being conducted at the "medical home" of the student. The "medical home" is defined as a health care provider and that provider's practice site chosen by the student's parent for the provision of health care, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3. If a student does not have a medical home, the school district shall provide the examination at the school physician's office or other comparably equipped facility. The medical examination required prior to participation shall be in accordance with the requirements as outlined in N.J.S.A. 6A:16-2.2(h)1 and Regulation 2431.2 and shall be documented using the Preparticipation Physical Evaluation form required by the Department of Education.

The school district shall distribute the Commissioner of Education developed sudden cardiac arrest pamphlet to a student participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.e.,

and the student's parent(s) shall each year and prior to participation by the student in an athletic activity comply with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.d.

The school district shall annually distribute the Commissioner of Education developed educational fact sheet relative to use and misuse of opioid drugs for sports related injuries to parents of students who participate in athletic activities and comply with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.10.

Information concerning a student's HIV/AIDS status shall not be required as part of the medical examination or health history pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:5C-1 et seq. The health findings of this medical examination shall be maintained as part of the student's health record.

The health history update shall include but not be limited to the following information:

1. Hospitalizations/operations;
2. Illnesses;
3. Injuries;
4. Care administered by a physician; and
5. Medications.

The medical examination conducted to determine the fitness of a student to participate in athletic competition and the health history update must include, as a minimum, the respective medical history information and physical assessments set forth in rules of the State Board of Education and incorporated in their entirety in regulations implementing this policy, and the following:

1. A medical history questionnaire, completed by the parent of the student, pupil, to determine if the student:
 - a. Has been medically advised not to participate in any sport, and the reason for such advice;
 - b. Is under a physician's care and the reasons for such care;
 - c. Has experienced loss of consciousness after an injury;
 - d. Has experienced a fracture or dislocation;
 - e. Has undergone any surgery;
 - f. Takes any medication on a regular basis, the names of such medication and the reasons for such medication;

- g. Has allergies including hives, asthma, and reaction to bee stings;
 - h. Has experienced frequent chest pains or palpitations;
 - i. Has a recent history of fatigue and undue tiredness;
 - j. Has a history of fainting with exercise; and
 - k. Has a history of family members dying suddenly.
2. A physical examination which shall include, as a minimum, no less than:
- a. Measurement of weight, height, and blood pressure;
 - b. Examination of the skin to determine the presence of infection, scars of previous surgery or trauma, jaundice, and purpura;
 - c. Examination of the eyes to determine visual acuity, use of eyeglasses or contact lenses, and examination of the sclera for the presence of jaundice;
 - d. Examination of the ears to determine the presence of acute or chronic infection, perforation of the eardrum, and gross hearing loss;
 - e. Examination of the nose to assess the presence of deformity which may affect endurance;
 - f. Assessment of the neck to determine range of motion and the presence of pain associated with such motion;
 - g. Examination of chest contour;
 - h. Auscultation and percussion of the lungs;
 - i. Assessment of the heart with attention to the presence of murmurs, noting rhythm and rate;
 - j. Assessment of the abdomen with attention to the possible presence of hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, or abnormal masses;
 - k. Assessment of the back to determine range of motion and abnormal curvature of the spine;
 - l. Examination of extremities to determine abnormal mobility or

- m. immobility, deformity, instability, muscle weakness or atrophy, surgical scars and varicosities;
- n. Examination of the testes to determine the presence and descent of both testes, abnormal masses or configurations, or hernia;
- o. Assessment of physiological maturation; and
- p. Neurological examination to assess balance and coordination and the presence of abnormal reflexes.

Eligibility Standards

A student who wishes to participate in a program of athletic competition, including cheerleading, must submit, on a form provided by the district, the signed consent of his/her parent. The consent of the parent of a student who wishes to participate in a program of athletic competition, including cheerleading, must include an acknowledgment of the physical hazards that may be encountered in the sport in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-9.1 (d) and (e).

Injuries

Written procedures shall be established to ensure:

1. Adequate emergency care for any student injured in a practice or a game;
2. Proper follow-up care and treatment;
3. Communication with parent;
4. Execution of school accident reports and insurance forms; and
5. Appropriate medical release or approval before a student resumes participation.

Safety

Safety of athletic equipment and facilities, transportation, and playing conditions shall be given top priority by the Athletic Director, coaches, and Principals. Planning for the safety of participants and spectators at home and away games is also the responsibility of the Athletic Director, coaches, and Principals.

Scheduling of Games

Before the beginning of each sports season, the Athletic Director shall submit to the Superintendent a schedule of games for the high school teams to be presented to the Board of Education for approval.

Postseason contests and tournament participation must be approved by the Principal and be sanctioned by the NJSIAA. Changes during the season must be approved by the Principal.

Conduct at Games

The athletic Director, coaches, and Principals shall make every effort to:

1. Encourage attendance of students, parent, and the public;
2. Promote spectator enjoyment and spirit; and
3. Require sportsmanlike conduct of all players and spectators at all games.

Such efforts may include preseason and/or pre-game communication with students and the public as well as adequate supervision at games.

Appointment and Evaluation of Coaches

All coaches shall be appointed on an annual basis. The high school Principal shall recommend to the Superintendent the appointments of all high school coaching positions after consultation with the Athletic Director. Head coaches shall participate in the selection of assistant coaches.

The Superintendent shall establish a job description and criteria and procedures for the evaluation of coaches. The job description and evaluative criteria should emphasize coaching competence and a caring attitude and concern for every member of the team.

Volunteer Coaches

Volunteer coaches who are actively involved in coaching or instruction shall hold permanent New Jersey teaching certification or work under the direct supervision of the coaching staff. They must be approved by the Athletic Director, the Principal, and the Board of Education prior to assuming any coaching responsibilities. Volunteer coaches shall receive no remuneration for services. This restriction includes budgeted funds, gifts, and monies from fundraising activities. Volunteer coaches shall serve under the supervision of the professional coaching staff. Any other person assisting a team in any capacity other than coaching must be approved by the Athletic Director.

Emergency Procedures

Athletic coaches shall be trained in first aid to include sports-related concussion and head injuries, the use of a defibrillator, the identification of student athletes who are injured or disabled in the

course of any athletic program or activity.

The Superintendent or designee shall prepare procedures for responding to non-serious or non-life-threatening injury sustained by a student while participating in sports or other athletic activity. These procedures shall be reviewed annually, updated as necessary, and disseminated to appropriate staff members.

Interscholastic Standards

The Board shall approve annually a program of interscholastic athletics and shall require that all facilities utilized in that program, whether or not the property of this Board, properly safeguard both players and spectators and are kept free from hazardous conditions.

The Board adopts the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules, and Regulations of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association as Board policy and shall review such rules on a regular basis to ascertain they continue to be in conformity with the objectives of this Board.

Parental Support and Involvement

Parent(s) and the general public are encouraged to attend all interscholastic athletic contests. In addition, parent(s) and the public are encouraged to attend and participate in activities which support athletic teams.

Coaches are expected to inform parent(s) about practice session times, game schedules, training rules, requirements and expectations of team members, and other pertinent information. Parent(s) are asked to give their support to the rules, requirements, and expectations so that their sons and daughters can derive maximum benefit from participation on athletic teams.

Parent(s) should contact the coach if a question or concern arises during the season. If a parent feels that a concern has not been satisfactorily addressed through informal communication with the coach, the parent should talk with the Athletic Director. If the concern is still not resolved, it can be taken to the high school Principal. Additional steps in the appeal process are outlined in Board policy.

Special Education Students

To participate in interscholastic competition, special education students must meet the same requirements listed above in conformity with IEPs.

Good Sportsmanship

The Board believes that instilling habits of good sportsmanship should be one of the primary goals of athletic endeavors and that all district employees should model good behaviors in this area.

It is especially important that the Athletic Director and coaches accept the responsibility for

encouraging young athletes to handle themselves in a sportsmanlike way and be models of self-control and dignity for players and spectators. Coaches shall include discussions on courtesy and sportsmanlike behavior as part of pre-game activities. Student fans shall be reminded that their conduct reflects on the schools of this district and that poor sportsmanship will be disciplined.

Parent(s) and other adult spectators shall also be encouraged to act as models for young people by demonstrating self-control and dignity at all athletic events.

Unsportsmanlike behavior as exhibited through verbal abuse, rude gestures, taunts, obscenities, thrown objects, etc., shall not be tolerated in students, staff, or any persons in attendance at district athletic competitions. Discipline may include, but not be limited to, eviction from the competition and prevention from attending further competitions.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall prepare regulations on good sportsmanship and ensure their dissemination to students, parent(s), and the community.

Insurance

The Board will cover each participant in interscholastic football with insurance coverage as recommended by the current insurance carrier. All other interscholastic activities shall be covered at the recommendation of the insurance advisor and Superintendent.

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) shall be strongly encouraged to participate in the supplemental student accident insurance program offered by the Board.

The Superintendent shall annually prepare, approve, and present to the Board for its consideration a program of interscholastic athletics that includes a complete schedule of athletic events and inform the Board of changes in that schedule.

N.J.S.A. 2C:21-11

N.J.S.A. 18A:11-3 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.7; 6A:16-1.4; 6A:16-2 et seq.

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