

Pocahontas County Schools Athletic Policy

Purpose

Pocahontas County recognizes the importance of athletic activities in providing students with important opportunities for a total education. These activities teach students' lifetime values such as commitment, discipline, hard work, leadership, teamwork, and physical fitness, all of which are the foundation for academic success. Participation in athletic activities contributes to the physical, emotional, and social health of our students and promotes a sense of unity and cooperation among athletes, the student body, and the community.

Pocahontas County Athletic Programs are designed to promote and provide the following: self-esteem, school spirit and pride, good citizenship, sportsmanship, cooperation, higher academic performance, responsibility to self and others, respect, positive role models, healthy lifestyles, teambuilding, and lifelong wellness. Programs will emphasize excellence, effort, improvement, and respect for coaches, teammates, and officials.

This policy establishes procedures for Pocahontas County School Athletic Programs to promote and maintain a proper balance between academics and athletics. Section One covers general athletic policies that pertain to students and parents, and Section Two covers general administrative procedures that are the responsibility of the athletic director and coaches. These policies and administrative procedures are designed to provide clear delineations of responsibility and accountability on the part of administrators, the athletic director, coaches, students, and parents in order to provide the guidance and support necessary to operate successful athletic programs.

Mission Statement

The mission of Pocahontas County School Athletics is to provide student the opportunity to compete successfully in an athletic program during their educational experience. Athletic programs are designed to promote and provide the following: self-esteem, school spirit and pride, good citizenship, sportsmanship, higher academic performance, responsibility to self and others, respect for coaches, teammates, and officials, positive role models, teambuilding, and life-long wellness. Strong work ethics and disciplined judgment provides for personal achievement.

Section One

General

1. Participating in athletics in Pocahontas County Schools is a privilege that is extended to all students who wish to practice and compete as a member of a team. Athletes assume responsibilities to their school and to their teammates when they choose to play sports and participate within interscholastic activities guidelines mandated by the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC).
2. The primary goal of athletic participation is to develop the athletic talents, physical skills, and emotional maturation of students as members of a team. Winning is important because success is measured by results, but effort and sportsmanship are also important and a balance must be maintained between winning, effort, and sportsmanship in measuring the success of a team or the athletic program.

- Athletes are selected for teams based on their athletic talent, physical skills, and emotional maturity. No player is guaranteed a specified or equal amount of playing time; the best players will play the most. However, athletes for Pocahontas County must understand that winning and losing are a team effort, no single player is responsible for winning a game and no single player is responsible for losing a game. Every practice and every game **contest** is a team effort.

Athletic Department Funding

- ~~Athletic funds are provided for athletic equipment, supplies, uniforms, and all officials for each program. This fund is referred to as the General Athletic Account. Teams do not receive a set portion from this fund, the budget is centrally managed, with the athletic director and coaches recommending funding priorities to the principal. This account only receives money through ticket sales. Individual sports each have their own account. The money for the individual accounts comes from fundraising, concession stand profit, and donations. Individual program accounts assist with covering transportation costs and any other expenses the coach, athletic director, and administrators deem appropriate.~~ Each athletic program has an individual account. All programs will be responsible for sports and medical equipment, field expenses, transportation costs, officials, uniforms, and any other expenses associated with that individual sport.
- ~~The level of funding that the athletic program receives is insufficient to adequately support athletic teams entirely. Equipment that should be replaced on a yearly basis, such as balls, bats, scorebooks, and athletic letters and pins must be purchased every year. That leaves little, if any, money in the athletic budget to purchase more expensive items such as uniforms or major pieces of equipment; therefore, teams will be placed on a uniform rotation schedule for replacement on a periodic basis.~~ All programs are self-sustaining and will seek money through fundraising, donations, and ticket/concession sales.
- The accountability and care of athletic equipment and uniforms is extremely important to ensure that these expensive items last as long as possible.

Parent Involvement

- Parental support is a vital component to the athletic programs in Pocahontas County Schools. Parents support coaches by ensuring that their children maintain athletic eligibility and attend practice, and they support their children by being visibly present at events.
- Parents are held to the same standards of conduct and sportsmanship while spectators ~~as~~ **of** student athletes. The Player-Parent-Coach Contract clarifies expectations for parental behavior at athletic events.

Eligibility

- Students must maintain academic eligibility to participate in athletics. Academic eligibility is determined by grade point average (GPA). The GPA is calculated from previous semester (the previous two nine weeks prior to the athletic program beginning). **Football, Boys/Girls Soccer, Cheerleading, Golf, and Boys/Girls Basketball eligibility will be determined using the 3rd and 4th 9 Weeks of the previous year (Spring Semester).** If a student is ineligible at this time, virtual courses will be offered throughout the summer to increase his/her GPA or students may regain eligibility at the end of the 1st 9 Weeks of the current school year by obtaining a 2.0 GPA. **Baseball, Softball, and Boys/Girls Track eligibility will be calculated by using the 1st and 2nd 9 Weeks of the current school year. If a student is ineligible, he/she can obtain eligibility by obtaining a 2.0 by the end of the 3rd 9 Weeks.** This is not to be confused with the ~~overall~~ Cumulative Grade Point Average, which is the overall average for a student's school career. Computation of eligibility will be completed by the athletic director or respective coach using the criteria from West Virginia Secondary Commission (WVSSAC). ~~If a student athlete is failing a~~

class during the respective sports season he/she will be declared ineligible for competition until a passing grade is confirmed by building principal, athletic director, or coach. This may only be a one game suspension if the student athlete makes effort to improve scores. Pocahontas County School students are expected to maintain at 2.0 during the duration of their sport, this applies to all elementary, middle, and high school students. Students, parents, and coaches will monitor current academic eligibility throughout the season to ensure success and maintain high expectations for academics, as well as athletics.

2. Any student athlete participating in high school sanctioned sports must provide record of a sports physical, dated after June 1st of the upcoming school year. Parent, athlete, and physician must complete and sign all sections of the form. Athletes are not permitted to participate in practice or contests until this form is on file with the athletic director.

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Attendance

1. A student suspended from school may not participate in practice, ~~or~~ competition, or any school sponsored event until the suspension is completed.
2. A student must be in attendance ½ day in order to participate in a sporting event or practice session occurring that day. A doctor's note or an educational requirement verification should accompany a student upon their return. The athletic director, principal, or assistant principal must clear any absences and should be notified in advance if an absence will occur.
3. Regular attendance, promptness, and participation at practice are required if the student athlete wishes to maintain positive athletic standing with the team. Athletes will be permitted 5 absences for the sport they are participating (this includes practice and contests). Upon the 6th absence, termination from the team may be issued.
4. Each athlete must complete 14 days of practice before competing in the first scheduled event. If an athlete is still participating in a sport because of state playoffs, the athlete will only need to complete 7 days of practice to become eligible. If the prior sport ends even 2 days prior to start of new season, the athlete will then need to complete 14 days of practice as all other athletes.

Sports Insurance and Injury Notification

All student athletes are required to have health/medical insurance coverage. If he/she does not have private insurance, the school will offer coverage through an outside agency. Parents will be responsible for the one time cost, which will cover their child for the current school year. Each athlete will be given an insurance information form to be completed and returned by the end of the first week of practice. Each coach and the athletic director will retain a copy of this form in the event an emergency occurs. ~~to pay \$20.00 insurance fee prior to the first day of competition.~~ If an athlete is injured during practice/game and requires medical attention, the coach and parent will be required to complete a notification of injury form within 90 days of the incident. The athletic director provides injury forms, with instructions to all coaches.

Violation of School Rules

Student athletes are **expected** to ~~obey~~ **follow** all school rules as stated in the Student Handbook in accordance with Policy 4373 (Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools). If rules are violated, disciplinary action will occur and suspension may be imposed. These rules apply at school or any school sponsored program/event held on/off campus. If school suspension is deemed necessary, the student athlete will not be permitted to participate in practice, ~~or~~ contests, **or any school sponsored event** until the suspension is complete. This may also result in the dismissal from the team. ~~Coaches will determine individual and team expectations containing consequences. These will be presented to athletes and parents.~~

Participation and Behavior during Events

Athletes will participate in events as the coach deems appropriate. It is the coach's decision who participates, when the athlete participates, and how long the athlete participates. If an athlete refuses to participate in an event upon the request of the coach, a meeting will be conducted, and dismissal from the team may be issued. Participation is a privilege and athletes are expected to follow the coach's request during all practice sessions and events.

Lettering Policy

The award of a varsity letter is an accomplishment that athletes earn through dedication and hard work, and it recognizes athletes who have kept their commitments to the team throughout the season. Athletes must meet guidelines below in order to receive this award.

1. Varsity athletes who remain as members of the team in good standing throughout the full season are eligible to earn a varsity letter. (Must meet provisions below in playing time criteria)

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2. Senior athletes who have participated in a given program (varsity or Junior varsity for at least three years shall receive a varsity letter.
3. A student trainer/manager who has held the position for at least two seasons in the same sport may receive a letter and manager pin.
4. Injured athletes who meet the "playing time" criteria for the contest held up to the time of the injury may receive a letter.

Playing Time Criteria for Each Sport

1. Baseball/Softball: Participate in 50% of innings played.
2. Football: Participate in 50% of quarters played (Any player on a special team counts 1 Quarter for each special).
3. Golf: Participate in 50% of team matches played.
4. Soccer: Participate in 50% of halves played.
5. Basketball: Participate in a minimum of 18 quarters at the Varsity level.
6. Track and field: Score at least 15 points during the season in competition against opponents, place in an invitational or conference meet, or qualify in standards of Regional Track meet to advance to State Track Meet (Top 3 places in Regional Track Meet).

7. Volleyball: Participate in 50% of games played.
8. Cheerleading: Varsity members must cheer in at least 85% of the games and attend 85% of practices during the combined fall or winter season.

Section Two

Coaching Policies and Procedures

General

1. Coaching athletic teams is an extension of teaching in the classroom, and many of the things that make teachers effective also make coaches effective. Coaching a sport can be one of the most rewarding experiences an individual can have; it can also be a very challenging and difficult experience if team policies and procedures are non-existent or ineffective or lines of communication do not remain open between coaches, administrators, athletes, and parents. This section is designed to provide coaches with a set of policies and procedures to ensure a smooth and successful season.
2. Each coach develops their own coaching philosophy and specific team policies, but it must be consistent with and supportive of the school's academic goals, athletic philosophy, and policies. Section One outlined the school's general athletic policies in terms of winning, sportsmanship, and athletic participation. Sportsmanship comes before winning.

3. Unexcused absences from practice or scheduled competitions cannot be tolerated. If a player is injured, attendance at practice and home games is expected. Injured players, by observing practice and attending games, support the team concept of Pocahontas County School athletics. Five absences from practice or scheduled contests may result in dismissal from the team.
4. Communicating with athletes, parents, the athletic director, and school administrators is crucial. Especially important is communicating with parents when athletes are not performing in a satisfactory manner and are in danger of being removed from the team or losing their opportunity to earn a letter. Coaches will contact parents and athletic director if an athlete is not meeting the expectations during practice or events. After two contacts a meeting will be scheduled with the administration, athletic director, coach, parent, and athlete. Documentation of contact with parents, strategies the coach has implemented to assist the athlete in being successful, and meetings the coach has had with the athlete will be discussed at the meeting.

Athletic Director and/or Administrator Tasks/Responsibilities

The athletic director assists coaches with the daily operation of the school's athletic program, ensures that policies and procedures are compatible with higher directives and are being implemented to accomplish the school's academic and athletic goals. Specific duties include:

1. Attend all home competitions and assist school administrators with supervisory duties. The athletic director and/or administrator must be a visible presence at home competitions, demonstrating support for the coaches and athletes. Periodic appearances at team practices are

also necessary in order to observe coaches and athletes and to develop a feel for how coaches and athletes are performing.

2. Attend all scheduled WVSSAC athletic director meetings to represent Pocahontas County Schools. The primary purpose of these meetings is to coordinate policy and procedures issues and schedule athletic competition dates. Ensure that all parties are kept informed of any changes to establish policies and procedures and that the athletic schedule is reviewed and approved by school administrators.
3. Complete and submit bus transportation requests.
4. Manage the athletics accounts, ensuring that teams have the necessary uniforms and equipment to practice and compete.
5. Maintain an adequate supply of school letters and sports pins to award athletes for earning a varsity letter; maintain an accurate yearly roster, by sport, of athletes who earn a varsity letter.
6. Schedule games for competition with visiting teams and notify officials. Maintain a log of the number games played throughout the season in order to reconcile the officials' contract and facilitate payment.
7. Provide coaches a game/location schedule for away competitions.
8. Coordinate with coaches and arrange pre/post season meetings. ~~and end of season sports banquets.~~
9. Collect and maintain records of uniform and supply inventories from each coach at the conclusion of the season.
10. Conduct observations and complete yearly evaluations on all coaching staff that are compensated for their services.

Coaching Tasks/Responsibilities

1. Coaches are required to be at every practice and scheduled contests; if volunteer assistant coaches are used, the athletic director and administrator will need to be notified prior to the coach's absence.
2. Schedule a parent/athlete meeting before the first day of practice to discuss issues of concern to athletes and parents, have athlete and parents complete the Player-Parent-Coach Contract **and the Insurance Information sheet**, ~~collect the \$20.00 insurance fee and turn all money with roster of players that have paid into the athletic director prior to the first contest,~~ collect all physical forms ~~and provide them to the athletic director prior to the first day of practice, and have parents complete the Player Contact Information Sheet.~~ **and turn all paperwork in to the athletic director by the last day of the first week of practice.**
3. Ensure that each athlete has 14 practices prior to participation in the first contest.

4. Maintain a team notebook that contains the information necessary to ensure communications with school administrators, parents, and students. Each student must have on file in the notebook physical forms, the Player-Parent-Coach Contract, ~~Player Contact~~ Insurance Information Sheet, ~~medical information for each athlete~~, team rosters, and schedules. This notebook must be with the coach at all away competitions and practices.
5. Maintain accountability of uniforms and equipment, and ensure that all uniforms and equipment are returned at the end of the season. Inventory all uniforms and equipment and submit the signed inventory to the athletic director after the season's conclusion (copy with uniforms) in order for coaches' evaluations to be completed and submitted to the appropriate office for payment.
6. Determine which athletes meet the criteria for lettering and submit a list to the athletic director so that letters, pins, and bars can be awarded at appropriate ceremonies.
7. Keep documentation of all injuries and submit a copy of the notification of injury form to the athletic director.

Pocahontas County Schools are committed to providing students with every opportunity to be successful in academics, as well as successful participants in athletic programs.

Adopted: November 9, 2016
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