

Hall Memorial School Student-Parent-Coach Sports Handbook



This handbook is a supplement to the student handbook for Hall Memorial School. It is written to provide students, parents, and coaches with basic information about our interscholastic sports programs. Many items in the booklet are taken directly from the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) handouts to Athletic Directors. They are indicated with a (*)

Research indicates a student involved in co-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after their school days.

The Hall Memorial School Athletic Department hopes each student-athlete will have a positive and enjoyable experience in each and any program he/she chooses to participate in. We hope that the information provided in this handbook will be of assistance to students, parents, and coaches as they

participate in our athletic programs. Please contact Matthew Flegert in the main office, mflegert@willingtonct.org or Mary Kay Tshonas at mtshonas@willingtonct.org .

***INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

Interscholastic athletics for middle school boys and girls in Connecticut are considered to be an integral part of the total educational program. It goes without saying that they should supplement, rather than serve as a substitute for, the traditional physical education and intramural programs in our member schools. The purposes of the interscholastic guidelines are:

- *To recommend interscholastic athletic guidelines in Connecticut middle schools so that they make the maximum contribution to the physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral growth of member school participants.
- *To develop intelligent recognition of the proper place of interscholastic athletics in the education of our youth.
- *To nurture cordial relationships among member schools, coaches, and officials by encouraging optimum standards of sportsmanship and citizenship.
- *To promote a program of interscholastic athletics that will provide for equitable competition among schools.

***GENERAL ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR MIDDLE LEVEL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

1. Only members of the school’s student body, or those enrolled in authorized public schools of choice, such as state authorized charter, magnet, regional cooperative, inter-district satellite schools, are eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics. Eligibility to participate is extended to those attending from the sending school or school from which he/she would normally matriculate when the school of choice does not provide interscholastic programs. The alternative schools must be state authorized.
2. Student-athletes must meet the scholastic requirements of their own school in order to participate in interscholastic athletics.
3. Student-athletes must meet the school’s requirements for good citizenship.
4. Student-athletes may play on outside teams while playing on a school team, however, such play should be limited in order to preserve time for academics and prevent injuries from overuse.
5. Girls are permitted to participate on either a girls’ team or a boys’ team in a given sport, but not on both, in the same school year. Schools may exclude girls from boys’ teams when they can demonstrate that the overall sports program does not limit athletic opportunities for girls.

6. Boys may not participate on girls teams.

7. The student-athlete shall not have reached his/her sixteenth (16th) birthday, except that a player, who reaches his/her sixteenth (16th) birthday on or after July 1, shall be eligible to compete during the ensuing school year if he/she is otherwise eligible.

Hall Memorial School participates in the North East Middle School Athletic Conference (NEMSAC). Interscholastic competition in the league provides a higher level of athletic skill for our young student athletes to experience. The league is divided into three (3) divisions:

Division #1	Division #2	Division #3
Bolton	Columbia	Mansfield
Coventry	Lebanon	STEM
Vernon	Windham	Willington

Recent restructuring of the schedule has given the league the ability to institute a playoff round in soccer, basketball, and baseball/softball.

PARTICIPATION

Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are eligible to participate in our interscholastic sports programs. We currently offer soccer for boys and girls in the fall, basketball for boys and girls in the winter, and baseball for boys and softball for girls in the spring. Tryouts for these sports are posted on the school

website and announced repeatedly on the school's morning announcements.

In order for a student to try out for a sports team they MUST have the following three (3) items submitted before the scheduled date of tryouts.

1. A signed permission slip in blue or black ink (by a parent or guardian)
2. A signed academic responsibility agreement (by both the student and the parent or guardian)
3. A current physical on file with the school nurse (a physical covers an athlete for thirteen (13) months; if a student is considering playing all sports we offer it is suggested that their physical occur during the summer months as this will cover them for the entire school year)

**Items 1 and 2 should be sent to the Athletic Director and item 3 needs to be sent to the school nurse.

Tryouts generally happen the first few days of school in September for soccer, in November around Thanksgiving for basketball, and in mid to late March for baseball/softball.

Selection to a team happens after tryouts with no lists posted in the open. Coaches are instructed to meet with each potential player and tell them if they have made the team.

A parent/guardian meeting is generally held at the beginning of the season to make everyone aware of our Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest protocols. Information is provided and parents/guardians and students must sign off that they have been informed. Parents should review this material with their child.

***COMMUNICATION**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By working together, the parent(s) and coach are better able to ensure each student athlete will benefit from the athletic program.

***COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH:**

1. Philosophy of the coach and the program
2. Expectations the coach has for all student-athletes involved in the program
3. Locations and times of practice sessions and contests
4. Team requirements and rules
5. Disciplinary actions that may result in dismissal or suspension

***COMMUNICATION COACHES SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS:**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectation

***CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES:**

1. The treatment of your son or daughter mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your son or daughter improve as a player/athlete
3. Concerns about your son or daughter's behavior

It sometimes can be very difficult to accept a child not participating or playing as much as a parent may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. Many concerns such as those listed above can be, and should be discussed with your son or daughter's coach. Other issues, such as: positions, level of participation, and playing time, must be left to the discretion of the coach and coaching staff.

Situations can occur that may require a conference between the coach and parent. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue or concern.

***IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE:**

1. Afford your son or daughter the opportunity to discuss the issue with his/her coach. Many times, these types of meetings may resolve an issue or concern.
2. If your son or daughter's meeting with the coach did not resolve the issue, call to schedule an appointment to meet with the coach.

3. If the coach cannot be reached, email the Director of Athletics, and a meeting will be scheduled for you.

4. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

5. If the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call and schedule an appointment to meet with the Director of Athletics to discuss the situation.

6. If the meeting with the Director of Athletics did not provide a satisfactory resolution, call and schedule an appointment to meet with the building Principal to discuss the situation.

***PARENTING YOUR STUDENT-ATHLETE**

This is a supplement to the parenting video on the CIAC website. <http://www.caadinc.org/parentvideo.html>

We ask that parents follow our three (3) main themes to help all of our students have a very successful interscholastic experience.

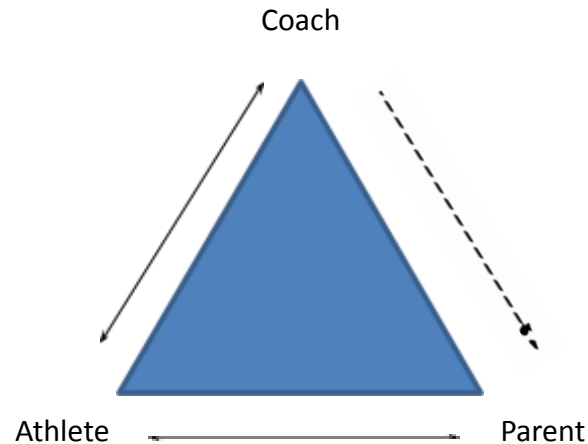
1. **“SUPPORT”** your child, the team, the coach, and the entire program in a positive way. Supporting “everyone” involved in a positive way will go a long way to help build team unity and provide a tremendous confidence builder. There is nothing worse for a child than the feeling that they have failed their parents. They need to know you have pride in them and love them win or lose and that you will always be there for them regardless of their performance.

2. Make it **“FUN”**- Research shows that the number one reason students participate in sports is to have fun. The school is providing a well-designed program that will certainly provide vigorous and strenuous activity. All of that hard work is only rewarding when it is supplemented with fun. Parents screaming at their child, other players, officials, or the coach only creates a stressful environment. Parents need to relax and enjoy the game knowing that the coach and the school are doing everything in their power to help each child grow. Parents need to understand that it is not about “their” child but rather that the decisions and actions of the coach should best serve the entire “team.” Trying to coach one’s son or daughter only undermines the entire program, and it never helps to be overly critical of your child’s performance. Most importantly parents need to make their child feel proud of

their accomplishments regardless of their playing time or their position on the team.

3. Keep it in **“PERSPECTIVE”**- A parent needs to understand where their son or daughter fits into the big picture. Most of the time athletes know exactly what role they play and how they are contributing to the team’s success. They may not be a starter, or getting the playing time a parent would like to see, but they are all contributing in some way and the athletes are aware of how. Coaches and athletes spend a lot of time together each day practicing and working hard to prepare for the upcoming competition. Whether your child is one of the starters or is one of the players that work hard against the starters in practice, they are all contributing to the success of that team. Parents who become dissatisfied with the coach or the program are very often expressing their own personal desires and not that of their child. We are not saying that coaches don’t make mistakes, however continual criticism and back biting on serve as a destructive force affecting the entire team. Parents who have legitimate concerns should certainly feel free to communicate with their child’s coach but should observe these simple communication ground rules when they do.

***TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILD AND THEIR COACH**



Always use the communication triangle first. That is, channel all questions or comments about the program such as playing time, formations, plays, or strategies through your own child. A good coach who is communicating to their team will equip their athletes with information that will often answer parental questions. It may not always be the answer a parent may want to hear, but it will be a tremendous way to help their child learn to communicate. If the athlete does not know the answer or says “I don’t know” then the parent should ask the athlete to obtain the answer from the coach. Speaking to the coach directly will complete the triangle between parent and coach, but should only be done in matters of health and safety.

When speaking to the coach or your child remember these tips:

- *Always be positive and in control of your emotions
- *Before or after a game or during a practice or game is not a good time to approach a coach or an athlete
- *Focus on your child’s best interest and not your own ego.