

# **Smithtown School District**



## **Student-Athlete Handbook**

*For Student-Athletes and their Parents*

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Dear Parents and Student-Athletes,

Welcome to the Smithtown Central School District Interscholastic Athletic Program.

Parents and student-athletes are encouraged to carefully read the entire Athletic Handbook. This booklet contains information that will be important throughout each sport season. The handbook is progressive in nature, giving parents and athletes the philosophy and expectations of our interscholastic program, beginning with the modified middle school program and culminating with the varsity level experience.

The guide gives parents and athletes a complete listing of all programs offered at each level and the season of placement for each sport as it pertains to the middle school, with four sport seasons and the high school, which conducts three sport seasons.

For your convenience, please log on to the Section XI web site, currently available to the public at [www.SectionXI.org](http://www.SectionXI.org). This web site allows the athletic community access to high school and modified (middle school) scheduling information, game times, schedules and directions to contest sites. In addition, the web site posts high school varsity league and division standings, tournament brackets, seeding information and other appropriate athletic information. It is an excellent source of information for all those involved in interscholastic athletics.

The district's website for the Physical Education, Health and Athletic Department is also a source of information for you. The site location is: <http://www.smithtown.k12.ny.us>.

If you have any questions or concerns about this booklet or interscholastic athletics in general, please contact me at 382-2100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick M. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Patrick M. Smith  
Coordinator of Physical Education,  
Health, Athletics and Nurses

Parental involvement is crucial for helping set positive direction for our children. The Booster Club is an organization that enables parents to stay actively involved with their children, yet giving them the independence they need to develop as quality citizens in our community. The Booster Club is a thriving and substantial organization. Their support and impact has been an integral part of the athletic successes we have enjoyed and the pride that has been generated for the Smithtown Schools.

## **Booster Club of Smithtown**

The Booster Club of Smithtown is a not for profit, tax exempt organization whose mission is to support and recognize the contributions and accomplishments of the student athletes of Smithtown High School in NY. Since 1951, this group of parents, teachers, coaches and community members have worked together to accomplish this goal.

Three times a year, the student athletes are brought together for a ceremony, sponsored by the Booster Club, recognizing Championship Teams, All-League and All- County recipients and individual accomplishments through the MVP and White Letter Awards. All Senior Athletes are recognized at the June awards brunch, which also recognizes the rich history and current contributions of the Smithtown student athletes.

All funds for the brunch, award plaques, scholarships, seminars for the college bound athletes and their parents, equipment, etc. are raised through an annual raffle, annual golf outing, summer camps, concessions at various sporting events, and membership dues.

The Booster Club welcomes new members and those who choose to help through any of the options listed on the application. Applications can be downloaded from the website.

Bookmark the web site:  
[www.smithtownboosterclub.com](http://www.smithtownboosterclub.com)



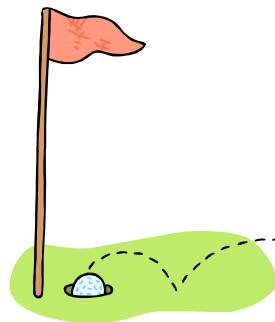
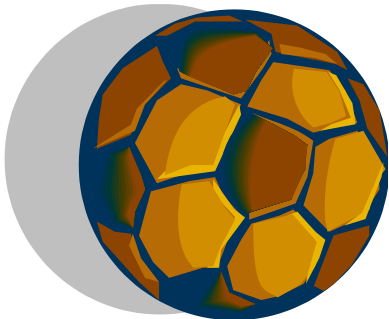
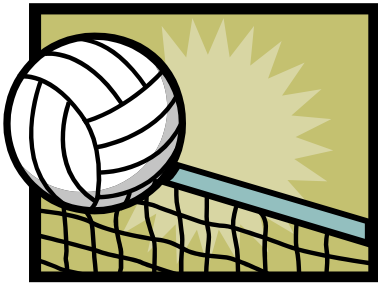
## GOVERNING BODIES IN ATHLETICS

Interscholastic Athletics is governed by rules, regulations and guidelines as established by the **New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA)**, which is directly responsible to the **State Education Department (SED) and the Commissioner of Education.**

The NYSPHSAA is comprised of eleven sections or chapters in the state of New York. Suffolk County, which is referred to as **Section XI (Suffolk County Public High School Athletic Association)**, is a member of the NYSPHSAA. It is the purpose of this organization to formulate and adopt policies that will enable public high schools to administer and govern interscholastic athletics in accordance with sound educational practices.

The NYSPHSAA and Section XI establish many of the rules, regulations and policies that govern public school interscholastic athletic competition. Season start and end dates, the Selection/Classification program (process for moving up), eligibility, schedules (dates of contests), placement (which opponents are played), contest rules, safety policies, practice mandates, post season tournament opportunities (league, division, county and state play-offs) are some of the areas governed by these associations. Section XI also is responsible for the scheduling of all officials for all contests played in Suffolk County.

The Smithtown Central School District, as a member of the Suffolk County Public High School Athletic Association, is obligated to comply with state and section regulations. Therefore, our district policies must parallel policies that govern Suffolk County public school athletic programs.



## HIGH SCHOOL (JUNIOR VARSITY AND VARSITY) SPORTS PROGRAMS

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Varsity</u>	<u>JV</u>
Cheerleading	X	X
Boys Cross Country	X	
Girls Cross Country	X	
Girls Field Hockey	X	X
Boys Football	X	X
Boys Golf	X	X
Girls Gymnastics	X	
Kickline	X	X
Boys Soccer	X	X
Girls Soccer	X	X
Girls Swimming	X	
Girls Tennis	X	X
Boys Volleyball	X	X
Girls Volleyball	X	X
<u>Winter</u>		
Boys Bowling	X	
Girls Bowling	X	
Cheerleading	X	X
Boys Basketball	X	X
Girls Basketball	X	X
Kickline	X	X
Boys Swimming	X	
Boys Indoor Track	X	
Girls Indoor Track	X	
Wrestling	X	X
<u>Spring</u>		
Boys Badminton	X	
Girls Badminton	X	
Boys Baseball	X	X
Girls Golf	X	X
Boys Lacrosse	X	X
Girls Lacrosse	X	X
Girls Softball	X	X
Boys Tennis	X	X
Boys Track & Field	X	
Girls Track & Field	X	

**Approximate Start/End Dates  
for the Three Sport Seasons  
(high school):**

**Fall:** Monday before Labor Day to the second/third week in November (Football, Cheerleading and Kickline begins two weeks before Labor Day).

**Winter:** Third Wednesday in November to the last week of February (Post season play includes February break).

**Spring:** First Monday after the first Saturday in March to the first week in June (includes the Spring break for all teams).

Dates are subject to change and are determined by the NYSPHSAA and Section XI. Contact the coach or the Athletic Office for exact dates.

- **Sport offerings might vary year to year.**
- **Some teams are a combined high school team.**

## MODIFIED (MIDDLE SCHOOLS) ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

### Fall 7 and 8

Cheerleading	X
Boys/Girls Cross Country	X
Girls Field Hockey	X
Boys Football	X
Kickline	X
Boys Soccer	X
Girls Soccer	X
Girls Tennis	X

### Early Winter 7 and 8

Boys Basketball	X
Cheerleading	X
Kickline	X
Girls Volleyball	X

### Late Winter 7 and 8

Girls Basketball	X
Boys Volleyball	X
Wrestling	X

### Spring 7 and 8

Boys Baseball	X
Girls Gymnastics	X
Boys Lacrosse	X
Girls Lacrosse	X
Girls Softball	X
Boys Tennis	X
Girls Track	X
Boys Track	X

#### **Approximate Start and End Dates for the Four Sport Seasons (middle school):**

**Fall:** Second day of school through the first week in November.

**Early Winter:** Early November through late January

**Late Winter:** Late January through late March.

**Spring:** Late March through early June.

The exact scheduled start dates for the modified program are determined in the spring of the previous school year. Contact the coach or the athletic office for specific dates at that time.

\*Please note the season placement for middle school volleyball, which is different than the high school. Some middle schools will have two teams offered for certain sports.



## **PHILOSOPHY**

Interscholastic athletics in the Smithtown Central School District is an outgrowth of our physical education and health program and, therefore, is an integral part of the district's total educational program. The interscholastic competitive environment provides an opportunity for our participants to learn positive life skills, values and ethics in a climate that demands dedication, responsibility, self-discipline, cooperation, a positive work ethic and respect for others. This program provides an opportunity for all to share their common interests, respect their differences, and appreciate physical competition as a lifelong process.

All involved in the program must show a personal commitment to the goals of the team and make the personal sacrifices necessary in order to achieve success. Making such a commitment to excellence nurtures a sense of pride, loyalty and leadership qualities in an athlete, enabling the individual to become more resilient and better prepared to face life's challenges. This unique experience allows students to achieve their full potential as students, athletes, and citizens.

It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one measure of success. Ultimately, the real challenge is guiding the individual and the team to reach full potential. This is the true measure of achievement. The competitive athletic environment is one that demands respect for a full effort, and applause for those who rise to the challenge and accept the risk of defeat. Those who are successful in life are those who have learned to embrace challenge, and take personal risks. Dedication and self-sacrifice on the athletic field do not always result in victory over the opponent. However, if one strives towards reaching full potential, with passion and perseverance, personal victories that last a lifetime are the end reward, even though the win-loss record may not always meet expectations.

The Smithtown interscholastic athletic program offers a wide variety of individual and team sports. The experience begins with a modified four-sport season program, provided for middle school seventh and eighth grade students, progressing to a three-sport season high school program, which includes opportunities for participation in junior varsity programs and culminates with a varsity level experience for the elite athlete.

## **MODIFIED PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Middle school "modified" programs, in general, offer an introduction to the world of competitive athletics. Sport activities offered are determined by the existence of leagues, student interest, facility availability, financial resources, and the relationship to the high school program. At this point, the focus is on learning basic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth, and healthy competition. The emphasis is to provide an opportunity for children, through physical participation in a positive competitive environment, to learn about their capabilities and appreciate human physical potential. Athletes are introduced to the benefits of physical conditioning, and encouraged to become responsible for maintaining an appropriate fitness level. The "modified" program allows for game rules and requirements of play to be adapted to match the competitive abilities of young, inexperienced, middle school athletes who have not yet reached emotional, social, physiological, or physical maturity.

While we would like to provide an opportunity for every athlete who expresses interest in a program, this is not always possible. While we try to avoid cuts at the middle school level, certain factors exist that must be dealt with by imposing a limitation on the number of students that can be accommodated in specific programs. If the number of students trying out for a team creates a situation that is difficult to manage, poses a safety problem, or is problematic because of facility consideration, reducing team size may be necessary. Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the availability of:

- 1) Financial resources
- 2) Qualified coaches
- 3) Suitable indoor or outdoor facilities
- 4) A safe environment
- 5) Student interest

In order for the desired development of the adolescent athlete and team to occur, practice sessions are vital. The NYSPHSAA and Section XI have established sport specific practice guidelines which govern the number of practices that each individual and team must have in order to be eligible for competition. There are also established guidelines which govern the number of contests allowed, and in certain sports, mandate days of rest between scheduled contests.

Coaches expect athletes to regularly attend five/six practices a week lasting between one and one half to two hours in duration, in preparation for the six to twelve contests that are scheduled against opponents from other school districts. Practices or contests can be scheduled on Saturdays, and vacation dates. Opportunities for contest participation for each team member will exist over the course of a season, providing that the athlete meets program expectations. Playing time will vary between individuals and will be determined by the coach. Determining factors will include readiness capacity, skill level, team expectations and safety. Athletes in all programs, regardless of level, are expected to be committed and give a full effort to practice sessions, maintain a positive and cooperative attitude and show a willingness to meet the team's needs with respect to position and role. Every athlete is expected to demonstrate respect for others and promote positive sportsmanship. In addition, the athlete must have enough skill and physical maturity to safely participate in the competitive climate.

**Exceptional** seventh or eighth grader athletes may be permitted to try out for a high school sport under the New York State Department of Education program called Athletic Placement Process. This process is seldom applied in our district. The guidelines for this program will be addressed later in this Athletic Handbook.

### **JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

The junior varsity program is intended for those who display the potential for continued development into productive varsity level players. Teams are comprised of mostly ninth and tenth grade athletes. In certain situations, juniors, who may be still viewed as potential contributors at the varsity level, may be allowed to participate on a junior varsity squad. This circumstance however, is more the exception to the rule.

Some sports have an additional JV squad (JV "9" or JV "2"). JV "9" teams are comprised of only ninth graders and they compete against opposing teams comprised of only ninth graders. Mandates enable them to practice/compete against traditional JV squads and can if league alignments warrant. JV "2" teams are an additional JV team comprised of ninth, tenth and possibly some eleventh graders.

At this point in the athlete's development, the level of expectation increases substantially. The high school sport season (three seasons per year) is longer than the middle school sport season (four seasons per year). The practice sessions are longer and more intense and the skill requirements for participation in contests are greater. The atmosphere is more competitive and in many cases athletes, who were able to meet the demands of play at the modified program, will not be able to meet the expectations of participation at the junior varsity level. Athletes must be

prepared for a competitive tryout situation and should not assume that they will automatically make the team because they were involved in the program at the modified level. Each and every season is treated as a new year and tryouts are conducted accordingly.

Skill, conditioning, work ethic and reliability are big factors in an athlete's quest to move up. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play, and social and emotional development. Junior varsity programs work towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and the quest for victory. The outcome of the contest does become a consideration at this level.

The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful junior varsity program and player. For all team members, meaningful contest participation will exist over the course of a season, providing the athlete meets program expectations. **A specified amount of playing time, however, is never guaranteed.** Athletes are expected to compete for a position, and earn their position in the starting line-up.

The time commitment of a participant involved in a junior varsity program is similar to that at the varsity level. Athletes and parents should be prepared for a six-day-a-week commitment for games and practices. **While practices are not held on certain religious holy days, the athlete will be expected to make a full commitment to scheduled team practices during vacation periods.** With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the junior varsity level.

## **VARSITY PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Varsity competition is the culminating experience for each sport's program. It is an experience provided for the elite athlete and is the most demanding and competitive of all programs. Although junior and senior athletes dominate most varsity team rosters, gifted ninth and tenth grade athletes are eligible for varsity level play. Prior participation in the program does not guarantee an athlete a spot on the roster, even if the athlete was a member of the varsity squad the preceding year.

Squad size is limited in many sports at the varsity level, although there are a few sports that will accommodate more numbers in practice and in competitive situations than others. However, even in those sports where cuts are not made in a given year, athletes must still understand that they may be denied an opportunity to participate unless they meet program expectations, especially with respect to start dates, attendance and commitment. Athletes who do not meet program expectations will not be eligible to earn a varsity letter award.

The number of participants on most varsity teams is a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest. It is vital that each member understands and accepts their role on the team, as the number of roster positions is relative to the student's acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of team goals. **While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed, since the outcome of the contest becomes an important consideration at this level.**

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for varsity play. Athletes will be expected to practice 2 to 3 hours per day, six days per week, **with commitment often extended into vacation periods for all sports seasons.** While practices are rarely held on religious holy days and Sundays, the dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity

program should be taken seriously. The expectation is the same for the starting player as it is for the limited role player. Every athlete involved on the team has a role in preparing the team for a demanding competitive schedule.

A primary goal of a varsity team is to win a league or division title, and/or qualify for post-season play in sectional, regional or state competition. In the individual sports (cross country, tennis, badminton, wrestling, golf, etc.), opportunities are presented to qualified, dedicated team members to represent the district in individual championship competitions at the league, division, county, and state levels. **These opportunities are only provided, however, to those individuals who show a complete and ongoing commitment to the team.**

### **SMITHTOWN CODE OF CONDUCT**

The opportunity to participate on a Smithtown School District team is a privilege afforded to our students by the Smithtown School District's Board of Education. With every privilege comes an inherent responsibility. The following Code of Conduct was developed for athletes with the intent to provide every athlete, parent and coach a clear set of expectations and rules of behavior for a Smithtown athlete. The Smithtown School District is proud of the accomplishments of our athletes. Throughout the years, however, the district has taken greater pride in the character, behavior and citizenship of the boys and girls who have worn the Smithtown uniform. Every athlete and parent should aspire to continue this tradition of excellence.

1. Sportsmanship practices are of paramount importance and should be conducted at all times:
  - Self-control and respect for teammates, opposing athletes, officials and spectators at all times. Foul language, game "trash talking" and insulting remarks are not acceptable behavior. Respect the integrity, safety and dignity of others and their property.
  - Cooperation- Athletes and parents are expected to follow the rules and protocol of their sport and should not intentionally violate the integrity of the sport.
  - Follow the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
  - Stress the values derived from playing a game fairly and to the best of ability.
  - Establish positive relations with visiting teams and hosts.
  - Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials.
  - Encourage leadership, use of initiative and good judgment by teammates.
  - Recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, moral, social and emotional well being of the individual player.
  - Remember that the athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life or death for the athlete, coach, school, spectator or community.
2. An athlete may not use alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances at any time. Disciplinary action will be taken and the school policy implemented if such instances occur.
3. Hazing is a form of harassment and will not be tolerated. Students found to have committed an act of harassment will be subjected to disciplinary action. Team members are encouraged and expected to notify their coach if such behavior occurs.
4. Athletes are expected to adhere to team rules and directions. Inappropriate behavior may interfere with a coach's ability to conduct games/ practices and puts the team's objectives at risk.
5. Students are expected to abide by the team attendance rules established by the coach. Coaches will clearly inform students of their policy so athletes are fully aware of the coach's expectations. Students are expected to attend every practice and competition.

Spectators are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Parents, family, friends, students and community members are an important aspect of the Smithtown athletic program and enhance the involvement of the athletes. All spectators are expected to conform to the accepted standard and practices of sportsmanship. Lack of sportsmanship, especially from spectators, leads to negative school impressions and will distract athletes. Please follow the following guidelines:

- Respect officials, visiting coaches, visiting players, and visiting spectators. Treat all visitors as guests to our school and community.
- Booing, whistling, stamping of feet, disrespectful remarks and obscene gestures must be avoided at all times. Positive remarks are encouraged.
- Refrain from all derogatory comments toward any player, coach, official or spectator.

The athletic coach will be responsible for determining the nature of any offense of this Code of Conduct and assign the disciplinary action.

The student athlete and his/her parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to discuss the charges and disciplinary action with the coach, athletic director or school administrator, if requested.

### **DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENT ACT (DASA)**

The athletic department recognizes that discrimination, hazing, harassment, sexual or otherwise, and/or bullying of students and staff is abusive and illegal behavior that harms victims and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation and intolerance. We further recognize that preventing and remedying hazing, harassment, and/or bullying in schools is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which students can learn and employees can work productively.

We are committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality and that is free from all forms of harassment. To this end, we strictly prohibit all forms of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events including those that take place at locations outside the district.

### **Hazing Definitions**

“Hazing” means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a risk of emotional, physical or psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Any humiliating, degrading or dangerous activity demanded of a student to join a group, regardless of the student’s willingness to participate (conduct has the potential to endanger the mental or physical health or safety of a student).
2. Any hurtful, aggressive, destructive or disruptive behavior such as striking, whipping, sleep deprivation, restraint or confinement, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.

3. Substance Abuse – use or abuse of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.
4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to emotional, physical or psychological stress, embarrassment, shame or humiliation that adversely affects the health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task or act that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.

### Bullying Definition

Bullying consists of inappropriate persistent behavior including threats, or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put downs and/or badgering others. Bullying similar to all forms of harassment and hazing are prohibited behaviors.

Common characteristics of bullying:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking or damaging a victim’s property
- Verbal – using words to berate, hurt, or humiliate
- Relational – maliciously spreading rumors, and/or actively excluding a person from the peer group to cause emotional harm.

### Reporting Complaints

In order for the District to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of hazing or bullying and persons with knowledge of hazing or bullying report the harassment immediately. The District will promptly investigate all complaints of hazing or bullying, formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

### Investigation/Resolution

If, after appropriate investigation, the District finds that a student, an employee or a third party including parent/guardian has violated this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken.

All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint of hazing or bullying have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind. The complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation.

## **SECTION XI SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

Spectators are an important part of the game and shall conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.

Spectators shall at all times respect officials, coaches and players, and extend all courtesies to them. While wholesome cheering is encouraged, taunting, foul and abusive language, inflammatory remarks and disrespectful signs and behavior are not acceptable. The school expects our adults and parents to set the tone for all spectators and serve as appropriate role models for all of our student-athletes. Please assist the school officials and coaches in providing

a healthy educational climate that our school can be proud of by maintaining an appropriate competitive perspective throughout the contest.

To promote a healthy lifestyle, it is imperative that student-athletes adhere to the tenets listed above. All students should be prepared to accept serious consequences if school officials, teachers, and/or coaches find that school district policies pertaining to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco have been violated. Furthermore, since alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco interfere with effective learning, the health and well being of the athlete and the goals of the individual and team, the athlete who is involved with the use of such substances must understand that they are seriously jeopardizing their status as a member of the team.

Spectators shall observe and obey the rules and regulations of the school concerning tobacco, smoking, food and soft drink consumption, use of lavatory facilities and the parking of their vehicles on school grounds.

New York State law prohibits smoking and alcoholic beverages of any kind on school property. The law further prohibits any person under the influence of alcohol to be on school property.

Spectators shall respect and obey all school officials, supervisors, security and police at all athletic contests.

**Spectators who fail to adhere to conduct expectations during a contest should be prepared to accept consequences for their inappropriate behavior. These consequences may include ejection from the contest site for the day or for an extended period of time.**

### **NYSPHSAA/SECTION XI MISCONDUCT RULE**

Any member of a squad removed from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct or for a flagrant foul shall not participate in that sport in the next scheduled contest or in NYSPHSAA tournament play. Disqualifications from one season carry over to the next season of participation.

Any member of the squad who strikes, shoves, kicks, or makes other physical contact with the intent to do so, to an official, shall be expelled from the game immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for one year from the date of the offense. Note: Member of the squad includes coach, player, manager, scorekeepers, timers, and statisticians.

A player or coach who has been suspended from play may not be present on the school grounds where the contest is played. **There is no appeal to the NYSPHSAA/Section XI Misconduct Rule.** The official's ruling is final, and not subject to question.

Note: The Smithtown Central School District reserves the right to impose an additional consequence, which may result in school disciplinary action, a longer period of suspension from practice and contests, and/or dismissal from the team by the coach and/or administration.

### **SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY**

- Visiting team members, students and adult spectators are guests, to be accorded all the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered and well-intentioned host would normally give.
- The visitors, in turn, are to act as invited guests, using the home school's facilities with care, while respecting the rules and customs of the home school.

- Officials are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretation; these decisions should be accepted.
- Spectators, student-athletes and coaches must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their actions can relate directly to the success of their team.

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

The Athletic Department recognizes that the primary responsibility of student-athletes is their education. Therefore, the Athletic Department supports the concept that student-athletes should work to their potential in the classroom and be committed to achieving maximum academic success. Coaches and teachers are encouraged to reinforce academic and behavioral expectations to those students not meeting appropriate standards. Therefore, athletes are expected to cooperate with guidelines established for those individuals who need to focus on greater academic responsibility and achievement.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

Because the interscholastic program is a direct outgrowth of the physical education program, any student-athlete excused from a physical education class for medical reasons may not participate in a practice, scrimmage, or contest on that same day. Additionally, students that are medically exempt from physical education class cannot participate on an inter-scholastic team. Certain medical conditions are exempt from this rule if the legal paperwork has been filed with the nurse's office and Athletic Directors office. Any contest that an ineligible athlete participates in is deemed a forfeit.

### **CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

No student-athlete may participate in a practice, scrimmage or contest on a day when the student was absent from school, unless a school administrator grants special permission for the absence.

If late to school, students must sign in at the attendance office, and present a legal note by the beginning of fifth period in order to be eligible for activity on that day.

Students who demonstrate problems with school absences, tardiness, either excused or unexcused, are subject to suspension and/or dismissal from the team. Athletes are expected to get to school on time, make a commitment to classroom attendance and demonstrate appropriate behavior.

Students who are suspended may not practice or compete during the suspension period. Students will not be permitted to play in their next regularly scheduled contest without adequate practice before the contest. The suspension period is not over until the athlete attends his/her next full day of school.

Coaches and administrators reserve the right to deal with those students who have been disciplined with "in school suspension" on an individual basis with respect to practice and/or contest eligibility.



## **COMMITMENT TO PRACTICE/GAMES**

Athletes are expected to attend every practice and contest, unless excused by their coach. If an athlete is in school attendance, he or she is expected at practice. **There are no unexcused absences from practices or games.** Excused absences are permitted for extra help (lateness only), death in the family, family illness, family emergencies, medical reasons, and religious observances. Timely communication between the coach, parent and/or athlete in this situation is essential.

Opportunities exist for Smithtown's student-athletes, especially at the high school level, to participate on non-school sponsored teams, while participating on school-sponsored teams. When these situations occur, sound communication between the student-athlete, parent/guardian, and coach is mandatory.

As discussed in the philosophy portion of this handbook, membership on a junior varsity or varsity team requires a considerable time commitment. The school district is responsible for monitoring the wellness and safety of each of our student-athletes. With this in mind, each situation involving outside school competition must be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, any anticipated conflicts with regard to school commitment and program expectations must be brought to the attention of the coaching staff prior to tryouts. **An athlete's first commitment must be to the school program. Coaches are not expected to excuse athletes from school practices and/or contests due to conflicts or commitments with outside community club or travel team practices, contests and/or tournaments. Parents and athletes should not expect coaches to compromise their commitment expectations.**

## **FAMILY VACATIONS**

When parents and student-athletes choose to take their family vacation during a sport season, it must be understood that the time missed by the student-athlete can affect team chemistry, personal conditioning, and performance level of the individual and the overall success of the team. Each and every individual on the team has a role, not just in the game, but in the practice climate as well, regardless of how much playing time the athlete is experiencing. Commitment during the vacation periods involves self-sacrifice, not only on the part of the coach and athlete, but the family as well. Attendance is mandatory during vacation periods. The modified program will not schedule as many practices as the high school level. Contact the coach prior to the season in order to fulfill team commitments and expectations.

## **VARSITY ATHLETIC VACATION POLICY**

**In order to ensure that students recognize and understand their responsibility as a member of the varsity team, parents and students are reminded that their participation requires attendance at all practices and games during non-school and vacation periods.**

**Therefore, student athletes must be prepared to participate in athletic practices or games that are scheduled during the following recesses: Thanksgiving Break (end of November), Winter Break (end of December), Mid-winter (mid-February) and Spring (April). As a school district and members of the Suffolk County Athletic Association, we are committed to preparing for and honoring the contest schedule during these non-school and vacation periods. In addition to these periods, the fall sports season will commence on the Monday prior to Labor Day, with football commencing two weeks prior to Labor Day.**

**Consequently, all varsity athletes and their families are reminded to plan vacations accordingly. It is recognized that there may be situations of an emergency nature that may**

**arise which would necessitate the missing of scheduled practices. The student athlete and family may request an exception from this policy by appealing to the coach.**

**All athletes should be expected to plan ahead and attend these practices and/or competitions, if they wish to remain on the team, maintain playing eligibility and earn an award letter. Student-athletes are expected to make a full commitment to the season and notify the coach of any potential commitment conflicts prior to tryouts. A problem with commitment may impact the selection process.**

Once selected for a team, an athlete is expected to finish the season. As a general rule, an individual who drops out once selections have been made may not try out for another team that season. If the coaches of both teams involved make an appeal to the Athletic Director and are both in agreement that a change would be beneficial, the appeal can be considered. A student dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons may not try out for another team that season.

### **POLICIES GOVERNING CONTESTS AND PRACTICE ON RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

According to the Holy Day Observance Committee Report approved by the Section XI Athletic Council, a Section XI member school may not schedule a contest or scrimmage on the following dates:

Rosh Hashanah	Holy Thursday
Yom Kippur	Good Friday
Christmas Eve	Easter
Christmas Day	First Day of Passover

Note: Individual schools may compete on these dates outside of Section XI (Suffolk County), for example at the Penn Relays on Holy Thursday, if the district approves such participation.

Practices may be conducted on the days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Christmas Day, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the first day of Passover, and Easter Sunday as an exception and on an **optional** basis. Contests can be scheduled the day after a holiday and coaches can have **optional** practices on certain holidays as part of the preparation process. These rare circumstances will be addressed and athletes will be informed that the practice is optional, with no implication of any penalty for missing the practice.

When teams do practice on the eve of a religious holiday or those dates mentioned above with special permission, coaches and team members are expected to respect the religious commitments and personal obligations of the family.

### **SCHOOL-SANCTIONED ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS**

There are numerous educational opportunities for students in our school system. The athletic department supports school-sanctioned programs and trips, but also realizes that student-athletes who choose to participate in school trips or school exchange programs may miss substantial amounts of practice time, which affects personal athletic goals and team goals.

Coaches, parents and student-athletes have a responsibility to each other and parents are expected to plan and communicate well in advance of each sport season when considering participation in school sanctioned programs and/or trips. All attempts should be made to consider the practice and/or game schedule and seek the advice of the coach before making commitments to plans. If an athlete's personal commitments compromise team goals, or present a conflict with

respect to the standards and expectations defined for all involved in the program, the athlete should be prepared to make a choice between his/her continued relationship with the team and their commitment to other personal goals.

### **POST-SEASON PLAY ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for post-season play (sectional, regional, intersectional or state competition), a team must have competed in six (6) school-scheduled contests, which occurred on six (6) different dates, during the season. An individual is eligible to compete for the team if he or she has been an eligible participant on a team in that sport in that school for a minimum of six (6) scheduled contests during the regular season.

For football, a student must be an eligible participant for a minimum of three contests. Contestants in individual sports (cross country, golf, gymnastics, swimming and diving, tennis, etc.) must have represented their school in six (6) scheduled contests during the season to be eligible. These required contests must occur on six different dates and must be completed prior to the conclusion of the team's regular schedule.

An athlete, who comes out late and/or misses part of the season due to injury, cannot come back and participate in post-season play without a medical waiver.

Note: In all cases, the number of contests referred to above must be officiated contests.

### **REQUIRED MEDICAL CLEARANCE**

The Commissioner's Regulations mandate that all athletes must be given a physical examination prior to their participation in interscholastic athletics.

State mandates require that the date of the actual physical examination must be current for the full upcoming school calendar year.

The best time to schedule this medical process is during late May or June. If this is done, the physical exam is completed for the following school year. Medical update forms will have to be completed by the parent/guardian prior to each sport season.

During the summer months, forms will only be available online, from the athletic office and school's main office. Upon completion of the physical exam, the medical forms must be returned to the school's main office. The nurse's office is sporadically open during the summer months.

**The school physician must approve all physicals. This process requires time and the athlete runs the risk of missing tryout dates when the medical clearance process is not completed in a timely manner.**

If the athlete wants to ensure participation in tryouts, responsibilities must be taken care of in a timely fashion. There will be no exception to this state mandated policy, and no exception made for a student who does not meet the deadline for tryouts.

Smithtown Central School District forms are the only accepted forms to clear students for participation in athletics. Forms can be obtained online, from the coaches, athletic office or nurses' office.

## PHYSICAL PROCEDURES

1. Obtain forms from the website, coach, athletic office or nurse's office.
2. Fill out the "Health Screening/Medical Update Form" and bring it to the doctor's office along with the "Health Certificate/Appraisal Form/Physical Form" to be completed by the doctor.
3. Fill out the "Athletic Permission/Code of Conduct Form" – return to coach.
4. Return all completed health forms to the nurse's office (attended school).
5. The appointed district physician will approve physicals.
6. You will receive an email when the student has been cleared by the nurse. If the nurse is unable to clear the student a reason will be given in the email.

An email will be sent when the student is cleared or if any information is missing from the physical.

PLEASE REMEMBER NO PHYSICAL WILL BE PROCESSED ON THE DAY IT IS TURNED IN

7. The "Medical Update Form"- If the date of the physical examination is not within thirty (30) days of the start of a given sport season, the state requires that a medical update form be completed and on file in the school health office. This form is to be completed by the parent/guardian. This must be filled out for each season.

**\*\*Please remember- this process takes time. No exceptions will be made. Waiting until the last minute, might result in the inability to participate on a school team for that season. The tryout period will start on the first day of the season.**

## REQUIREMENTS FOR TRYOUTS

Athletes are expected to participate on the first day and all other dates of tryouts. Athletes who miss the official start date and express a late interest will most likely be denied the opportunity to participate in the program. In programs where cuts are made, the coaches are expected to make their final selections from those who are in attendance at tryouts. Exception to this policy can be considered for those athletes that have a documented medical illness, family emergency or an injury. Consideration will only be given to those that notify the coach in advance of the tryouts.

As mentioned previously in this guide, commitment is vital to the success of all involved. There is undoubtedly a sacrifice to be made, not only on the part of the athlete, but on the family as well. Athletes and parents are expected to make certain that personal plans and work schedules are adjusted so as not to conflict with tryout dates, practices, and contests.

Each year is viewed as independent of another with respect to tryouts and the tryout is open to all. Athletes who were involved with the program the year before are not "guaranteed" a place on the team roster in the next season. All athletes should be prepared to "compete" for membership every year. Some students mature from one year to the next and may be included on the team after having been cut the year before. Athletes can gain a potential advantage when they make

more of a visible commitment to the program and improve significantly after having been involved in summer camps, summer league play, or community and organized club programs out of season. As was mentioned previously, as the level progresses to the varsity, the size of a team becomes more a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest.

**A note for seniors:** One of the most difficult situations coaches face is the dilemma of the senior who has been in the program for years and now is viewed as a limited role player. Seniors will not be accommodated with a junior varsity experience, as this is considered a developmental program.

At the varsity level, the best will play, regardless of age, as long as program expectations are met. Coaches are encouraged to discuss expectations with seniors. If it is clear to the coach during tryouts that the role of the senior will be limited, that information will be communicated. The senior presented with the opportunity to remain in the program with a limited role must be prepared to accept this role, and still meet all the expectations of the program with respect to attendance and work ethic, while still showing support for the team. This is an arduous challenge and possibly the most difficult team player role. The senior must be willing to meet this challenge with a positive attitude if he or she wishes to remain a part of the team.

If a coach feels that the senior has reached the limits of his or her potential and/or the athlete is incapable of adjusting to limited role expectations with a positive attitude, the coach may not provide the senior with the option of staying on the team.

### **ATHLETIC PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The Smithtown Central School District will approve seventh grade participation on varsity and junior varsity teams for selected, non-contact/individual teams and those sports where no middle school program exists. Seventh graders will be eligible to tryout for the following non-contact/individual teams only:

Girls' Gymnastics  
Cross Country  
Track and Field  
Swimming  
Tennis  
Bowling  
Golf

Eighth grade students are eligible to try out for high school athletic teams upon recommendation of the varsity coach.

**The Athletic Placement Process is designed for the “exceptional” athlete and must play at least 50% of the time. Few candidates will advance in this process. The following procedures must be followed in order to be considered.**

1. A written recommendation must come from the head varsity coach of that sport. The head varsity coach will collaborate with the following in making his/her judgment:
  - The athlete's middle school coach(es)
  - The athlete's Physical Education Teacher

- School Administrator
  - Guidance Counselor
  - Parents/Guardian
  - Doctor
2. In order for a student to be recommended, they must be deemed athletically “exceptional” by the athlete’s middle school coach (es), physical education teacher(s) and the head varsity coach. An athletically “exceptional” student refers to the following:
    - The athlete has exceedingly superior skill; well above age level.
    - The athlete will not have anyone of comparable skill to participate with or against on the modified level.
    - Safety concerns (on the modified program level) due to the skill level, strength or size of the athlete.
  3. If an athlete is deemed “exceptional” they will be offered the Athletic Placement Process at the discretion of the athletic director in conjunction with the head varsity coach. The following programmatic factors will influence the decision:
    - Cutting policy of that particular sport
    - Availability of the middle school team in that sport
    - Numbers of students trying out
    - Athletic Placement Process Guidelines
  4. If the athlete is awarded the opportunity and passes the Athletic Placement Process, the athlete is eligible to tryout but must play two levels up (if there is a modified program in that particular sport). They must be a starter or have significant playing time (50%) in order to be considered playing on a team of an older age group.
  5. The Athletic Director will submit a list of eligible student athletes to the Board Of Education for approval, for each athletic season.

**MOVING UP WHEN A MODIFIED PROGRAM IS NOT PROVIDED**

In those sports where an athlete is not presented with the opportunity to participate in a modified program, athletes are given more latitude with respect to qualification for participation in these high school programs. If the athlete has had extensive training and an appropriate competitive background in the sport and demonstrates the academic, social and emotional maturity for play at the high school level, the student can be recommended for Athletic Placement testing.

Transportation for any middle school student athlete qualifying for a high school team will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

**STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE AND S.E.D. FITNESS TESTING**

If the student-athlete is approved to participate in the Athletic Placement Process, the following procedures apply:

- a) The physician must administer a physical examination and determine the athlete’s physical health and readiness through a state-mandated examination and a physical maturity evaluation.

b) An authorized physical education teacher, appointed by the Director of Athletics, must administer an Athletic Performance Test, as required by the State Education Department. The specific tests mandated and qualifying scores are sport specific. No one else other than the designated district staff member may administer the required tests.

### **COACHING CERTIFICATIONS**

All Smithtown coaching personnel are certified in accordance with NYSPHSAA standards. As per state mandates, all coaches employed in our district are certified in CPR, First Aid and AED. In accordance with state mandates, Smithtown will always look to find qualified, certified educators to fill coaching assignments. If such a qualified educator is not available, the district may appoint a non-certified teacher as a coach.

Each coach is responsible for guiding his/her student-athletes through practices, scrimmages and games appropriate for their age and level of play. These activities are conducted so that the physical welfare, health, and safety of the participants is protected and fostered. The coach is responsible for teaching physical skills, moral values, sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play, in accordance with school philosophy. All activity should always be conducted in an appropriate educational environment.

### **THE ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TRAINER**

Athletes and parents must recognize the risk of injury that may occur during physical activity. Our staff is prepared to address injury needs and is trained to provide appropriate first aid in an emergency.

Smithtown provides an athletic trainer at the high school level for most practice and home contests, to provide emergency medical services for injured and rehabilitating athletes. This professional is qualified to develop prevention strategies through appropriate training methods and physical conditioning programs. The athletic trainer insures proper follow-up care after an injury, and consults with the parents, school nurse, coach and the school district physician when such communication is beneficial to the well being of the athlete. It is vital for our athletes and/or parents to bring illnesses, medical problems or injuries to the attention of the athletic trainer, school nurse and coach as soon as possible.

### **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Please be advised that the Smithtown School District has a comprehensive emergency medical plan in place, in the event of an accident or injury that occurs during practices or games. If the injury or illness requires a high level of care, the EMS system will be activated and emergency services called. If the athlete is injured in a practice or game on the home site and transported to a medical facility, the athletic trainer, a member of the coaching staff, or school personnel will accompany the athlete in the ambulance, wherever possible, if a parent is unavailable. The coach shall notify the school nurse, and an accident report will be initiated within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

When an emergency occurs at an away contest, and there is only one coach, the decision made must protect the interests of all the athletes involved. Therefore, it is critical that coaches have emergency contact numbers where a parent, family member, or designee can be reached during practices and contests in case a situation such as this arises. In these situations, contact will be

made and a course of direction established to ensure appropriate treatment and care of the injured athlete.

### **STUDENT-ATHLETE ACCIDENT/INSURANCE CLAIMS**

The Smithtown School District provides reasonable and customary coverage for claims in excess of a parent's underlying health insurance coverage.

Coaches will direct athletes and parents to use their family health insurance program as required, in order to be eligible for reimbursement of benefits payable under our excess coverage medical plan. In some cases, total costs for medical expenses will not be reimbursed, as the plan is based upon reasonable and customary coverage.

Parents and athletes should communicate with the school nurse to insure full compliance with district procedures.

### **RETURN TO PLAY AFTER INJURY**

Any student-athlete under treatment by a private physician must have written permission from his/her physician in order to return to active status in the sports program. If an athlete misses five (5) days of practice due to illness or injury, he or she must be given clearance by a private and/or school physician before returning to play. The school physician has the final authority to determine the physical capability of a student to participate in a sport.

### **HEAD INJURIES**

It is well known that participating in sports can be a highly rewarding experience. However, there are certain risks an athlete must face while involved in competitive athletic situations. One of these risks is the potential for injury. While most injuries are minor and heal over time, one cannot overlook the seriousness of head injuries.

Head injuries may occur in a number of ways: Contact with another player, contact with the ground or other equipment or a sudden movement or rotation of the head without a force. A mild brain injury may produce various signs and symptoms, which include dizziness, headache, nausea, and blurry vision. A more serious trauma to the head may result in loss of memory and/or brain function. Other types of head injuries can cause small tears and result in bleeding in the brain, a subdural hematoma. If a player returns to competition too soon, he or she may also be in danger of second impact syndrome, in which a mild head injury can become potentially fatal.

Head injuries in school interscholastic athletic programs have increased in numbers as the level of competition has risen. Therefore, Smithtown has taken special precautions to insure the safety of all athletes:

- 1) The pre-participation examination health questionnaire screens all athletes for a history of their head injuries. Please give as much information as possible about any head injury that may have occurred in the past.
- 2) Coaches are knowledgeable of the dangers of head injuries and monitors all athletes who sustain any head injuries during the season.



- 3) All coaches make certain that an athlete who has experienced a head injury is immediately brought to the attention of the athletic trainer. Head injury instructional guidelines are followed, with appropriate parental notification.
- 4) Any athlete at any level, who suffers a head injury, is required to see a school district approved physician and obtain medical clearance before returning to play. The school nurse has the list of District approved physicians that have been trained in the IMPACT concussion management program. These physicians are the **only** physicians that can clear a student for return to play after suffering a concussion. The school physician reserves the right to determine the capability of an athlete to return to a sport and may, in certain instances, require clearance from a specialist (neurologist, etc.).

### **SAFETY CONCERNS FOR MALE ATHLETES**

Although not required by the rules of all specific sports, it is recommended that all athletes consider wearing an athletic supporter and protective cup for all sports defined by the State Education Department as Contact/Collision (football, lacrosse, etc.), and for those sports defined as Limited Contact/Impact (basketball, baseball, etc.).

While coaches will advise their players to wear an athletic supporter and protective cup, they will not physically check to see that the athlete is, in fact, wearing one. Since there is potential for serious injury without wearing this protection, it is imperative that all parents reinforce this safety concern and make certain that the athlete has these personal items of protection with him and wears them at all practices and contests.

### **NUTRITION**

In order to approach peak performance in athletics, student-athletes, parents, and coaches need accurate information on how to properly fuel and nourish the body. The following information is standard guidelines to help promote healthy eating habits for athletes. The athlete has to monitor food intake to replenish excessive energy sources needed for rigorous and sustained practices/competitions.

1. Eat more complex carbohydrates. By ingesting carbohydrates, athletes maximize glycogen storage. Glycogen is the primary source of energy for muscles. Recommended sources of carbohydrates are grains, cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta, vegetables, and fruits. As an added bonus, most carbohydrate sources are also high in vitamins and minerals.
2. Eat moderate amounts of protein. Athletes must understand that eating excess protein is not beneficial. While athletes have a slightly increased protein requirement, the normal athletic diet is composed of more than adequate amounts of protein. Eat more complex carbohydrates, not more protein!
3. Eat less high-fat foods. Foods high in fats include fried foods, cookies, cakes, luncheon meats and whole milk dairy products. This does not mean avoid these foods totally. However, we must learn to choose low fat versions such as skim milk, lean beef, fish and chicken (minus the skin), and low fat snacks, such as pretzels.
4. Stay hydrated especially in hot weather. Studies clearly show that performance suffers in a dehydrated athlete. Drink before, during and after exercise. Plain cold water is usually the best. However, sports drinks may provide an edge if you exercise continuously over one hour. Thirst is not a good measure of when to drink fluids. A thirsty athlete is already in early stages of dehydration.

5. Maintain a healthy body composition. Avoid quick weight loss. Within reasonable guidelines, a leaner athlete is a more efficient athlete. A normal range of percent body fat for males is 7-18%, while a healthy range for females is 15-25%. Your body fat is determined by heredity, and of course, diet and exercise.
6. Replace carbohydrates used for energy during training and competition. In order to refuel your body to prepare for the next practice or game, carbohydrate rich foods need to be ingested soon after exercise. Eating 200-400 carbohydrate calories within 1-2 hours of exercise is best.
7. Eat an appropriate pre-competition meal Three to four hours before practicing or playing a game, athletes need to ‘fuel’ their bodies with a high carbohydrate, medium sized meal composed of familiar food. However, within an hour of exercise, always avoid foods high in sugar such as candy bars.
8. Don’t be tempted by nutritional supplements or other “performance-enhancers”.

Athletes should be able to properly fuel their bodies through a normal well-balanced diet that is especially rich in complex carbohydrates, while maintaining proper hydration levels. Nutritional supplements such as amino acids, protein, high doses of vitamins and minerals may actually be harmful.

Athletes have to monitor their food consumption. This is particularly important for female athletes. Menstruation irregularities and Osteoporosis are concerns for female athletes that are not properly nourished.

**Nutrition is an important aspect for leading a healthy lifestyle for everyone.** We, as a society, are currently experiencing obesity and overeating in record proportions. We have to address our eating habits and develop a plan to ensure a healthy lifestyle for ourselves and guide our children to understand and prioritize these concepts. Parents should familiarize themselves with a sound dietary/nutritional program for themselves and for their athlete.

## **FOOD SUPPLEMENTS**

In the past several years, a variety of performance-enhancing substances and medications have become available without prescription in the form of dietary supplements. As their use increases, we find that some of the supplements can cause health problems that outweigh any benefit they may provide.

The problem with these performance-enhancing substances is that there is no requirement for testing for efficacy or for side effects because these are considered to be natural foods. **Dietary supplements are not regulated by the FDA**, which places a substance under extreme scrutiny over several years before allowing the product to become available. Dietary supplements have not been tested in clinical trials to determine if they actually do what they claim to do. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the actual product contains the contents stated on the label.

In response to the recent focus on the use of food supplements the National Federation of State High School Associations has issued a position statement on the use of drugs, medicine and food supplements in interscholastic sports. The Smithtown School district supports the text of the committee’s statements listed below:

- “School personnel and coaches should not dispense any drug, medication or food supplement except with extreme caution and in accordance with policies developed in consultation with parents, health-care professionals and senior administrative personnel of the school or school district.”
- “Use of any drug, medication or food supplement in a way not prescribed by the manufacturer should not be authorized or encouraged by school personnel and coaches. Even natural substances in unnatural amounts may have short-term or long-term negative health effects.”
- “In order to minimize health and safety risks to student-athletes, maintain ethical standards and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes.”

The Smithtown School District does not support the use of dietary supplements to improve performance. We adhere to the application of persistent and meaningful training to achieve success.

### **SECTION XI HEAT ALERT POLICY**

Section XI, in an effort to protect the safety and well being of the athletes, has a Heat Alert Policy in place for those days where the temperature and humidity index warrants special precautions.

On those days when the Heat Index reaches 88 (or the Temperature/Humidity Index reaches 73), practice sessions are modified, and contests rules are modified to permit additional time outs for rest and forced water breaks.

On those days when the Heat Index reaches 95 (or the Temperature/Humidity Index reaches 78), no physical activity is permitted (swimming excluded). Team meetings are permitted.

The Section XI Safety Chairperson monitors heat and humidity conditions, and all public high schools are given notification of the alert on a daily basis when weather conditions are hot and/or extremely humid. All Section XI schools are mandated to comply with the Heat Alert Policy.

### **STUDENT-ATHLETE POSSESSIONS**

All athletes are provided with a locker for their personal use located in the physical education locker room or team room facility. Since this area is used by numerous students throughout the course of an afternoon and teams dismiss their athletes at varying times, it is impossible to make certain that the locker room facility is secured at all times.

Therefore, it is essential that each athlete purchases their own combination lock and assumes the responsibility for locking up and securing their books, clothing, and personal possessions prior to leaving the facility for practice and contests each day. **The school district is not responsible for lost/stolen property.**

**If the athlete leaves their personal belongings unlocked or out on the team bench in the locker room facility, they are inviting theft. Athletes are discouraged from bringing valuable personal items to school, where they will be left in the locker room facility. Excess cash, expensive jewelry and electronics should be left at home.**

Coaches will attempt to provide adequate supervision within the facility, but athletes are expected to do their part as well. More often than not, when personal belongings are taken, the athlete has not assumed his/her responsibility to secure them in an appropriate manner. Despite our best efforts at supervision, thefts sometimes occur.

### **TEAM UNIFORMS AND SCHOOL ISSUED EQUIPMENT**

Athletic equipment becomes more costly each year. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to secure all school issued equipment items and uniforms in a **locker that is locked** during the course of a season. Please do not keep the team uniforms in the locker room facility for long periods of time. They are best laundered and left at home until the day of a game. The expense of a uniform is significant and if the athlete forgets to lock his or her locker, the athlete will be expected to pay for the school issued athletic equipment and/or uniform.

### **CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

All athletes and parents are responsible for the cleaning and maintaining of all uniforms and equipment issued to them during the course of a season. Some of our most costly items may shrink, fade, or bleed color if washed in hot water. In addition, our logos, numbers, and screens may crack and peel off if temperature settings for washing and drying are too hot. Therefore, do not wash uniforms in hot water and avoid drying on hot temperature settings. Please wash uniforms in cold water and hang to dry. Be sure to read the tags on the cloth for washing and drying instructions. When in doubt, speak to the coach before laundering uniforms. If the uniform needs to be replaced, the athlete will be expected to pay for the replacement item.

### **RETURN OF SCHOOL ISSUED UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

It is the responsibility of the athlete to personally sign out and return all school issued equipment to their coach at the end of their season. All team uniforms and equipment are to be returned to the coach immediately after the last practice, contest or scheduled meeting by the coach. The athlete is not responsible for the final cleaning or washing of uniforms, as all items in our inventory are sent out to a professional reconditioning and cleaning service. Turning in equipment and uniforms “on time” insures that all items in the team inventory are available for pick-up by the reconditioning company on the scheduled date set for the end of the season.

Athletes should never give their school issued equipment or uniform to anyone else to return for them. Coaches keep accurate records of school issued inventory and if there are any items not returned at the end of the season, the athlete will be placed on an indebted list.

Athletes are not permitted to keep their uniforms at the end of a season. In an interscholastic athletic program, “jerseys are never retired”. Uniforms are costly to replace in small quantity, and allowing student-athletes to keep their uniforms would be fiscally irresponsible. In addition, many of our uniforms are custom made, and cannot be matched. All parents are asked to support our inventory policies, and make every effort to see to it that their child’s uniform and protective equipment are returned to the coach immediately following the last game of the season.

Please be advised that it is more beneficial to have the inventory item returned than to have the item paid for. Family cooperation is essential. Please make all attempts to locate and return all school issued athletic inventory at the end of the season.

Athletes who are indebted will not be issued any other school uniform or protective equipment for another sport season until they clear their indebtedness with the coach or athletic office. If the uniform is lost, or ruined, the athlete will be held responsible. Coaches will also be instructed to withhold the presentation of athletic awards until the missing items of inventory have been returned or paid for. **Seniors will not be issued diplomas and cap/gowns for graduation ceremony until all outstanding equipment/uniforms have been returned or monetarily reimbursed.**

### **ATHLETIC AWARDS**

All student-athletes who participate and complete the Modified (middle school), Junior Varsity and Varsity season shall be eligible for a school athletic award, providing that they have returned all issued uniforms and equipment. Award certificates to middle school athletes are presented to athletes by their coaches, in a team meeting or gathering at the end of their season. High school awards are presented at the Smithtown Booster Club's evening fall, winter and spring sports award programs or during individual team dinners. The requirements for the school awards vary with the nature of each sport and level and include the following:

Modified Program- Certificate of Participation

Junior Varsity Program- Certificate of Achievement

Varsity Program:

First Year – Varsity Letter and Sports Pin

Second Year – 2nd Year Pin

Third Year – 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Pin

Fourth, Fifth, Sixth Year – Plaque

White Letter Awards and Most Valuable Player Awards (for varsity players only) are presented to those athletes deemed worthy by the Head Varsity Coach. Head coaches have the right to establish criteria due to the nature of their team and sport.

The Smithtown Booster Club will also present at our sports ceremonies, plaques to individuals earning honors or members of those varsity teams who win County Championships. Sportsmanship winning teams will also be recognized.

County and State Championship Awards are presented to team members at the Section XI or State Finals, or at the Coaches Association Dinner. They are not purchased or presented by the school.

### **COACHES ASSOCIATIONS AND COUNTY AWARDS**

Many of the sports in Suffolk County have organized Coaches Associations that raise funds for various awards, which are presented at County Banquets. Such awards may include Honorable Mention, All-League, All-Conference, All-Division, and All-County Awards. Coaches Associations have no affiliation with the School District or Section XI. They are an independent body, governed by their own by-laws and officers. Therefore, these post-season awards, presented by the coaches, may vary from sport to sport and year to year. The members of the associations determine the selection criteria for awards, pay for the awards and fund the banquet. Neither the school, nor the Section, has any influence with regard to the selection of those individuals who receive these awards.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Athletes are expected to use transportation provided by the school “to” and “from” all athletic contests. Student-athletes are expected to arrive for bus departures on time and may not drive to the site. If a student does not make the bus and arrives at the site without administrative approval in advance, the athlete should not expect to participate.

In special cases, a parent may need permission to transport their child from a game site on a given date. In such cases, the request must be made to the coach in advance of the contest. These shall be considered only as the “rare exception” and should be reserved for emergency situations.

Athletes at away contests are expected to remain “on site” and under the direct supervision of the coach at all times. All students will be expected to conduct themselves appropriately when traveling with the team. **All athletes are expected to return to school with the team after contests as a continuation of the team experience.** Parents should not expect to take their athlete home from the game site unless it is the exception. Under no circumstances will a parent be allowed to take any other child home, but their own. Nor will a child be permitted to leave an away site with anyone other than his or her parent. Failing to comply with our transportation and supervision policies at away contests may jeopardize an athlete’s team eligibility.

Parents are expected to pick up athletes in a timely fashion after home games, or when the athlete returns from an away contest. Athletes should check with the coach for the estimated time of pick up.

In almost all cases at the middle school level, athletes will be finished with practice in time to use school district transportation if provided to return home at the end of the school day. At the high school level, junior varsity and varsity teams will finish practice in time to use district transportation as well. However, in some sports, such as basketball and volleyball, the boys and girls share facilities, which require practice at later times. The district will not be able to accommodate these athletes with district transportation. Transportation arrangements need to be made for travel home after late practices. All transportation to and from practices/home contests on these occasions, Saturdays and vacations are at the discretion of the parent and the athlete.

## **TRANSPORTATION TO POST-SEASON CONTESTS**

Any athlete participating in a Regional, Intersectional, or State Championship Event **must travel to the event on the transportation provided by Section XI.** Parents cannot transport their child to any post-season contest at the regional level or beyond. There is no appeal to this Section XI regulation.

An athlete may travel home with their parents provided that a written request is presented, in advance of the departure date to the Section XI Sports Chair Coordinator. If approval has not been given in advance, the athlete will be expected to return home from the contest with the Section XI team.

## **COLLEGE RECRUITMENT AND ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

Many of our student-athletes express an interest in continuing their athletic participation at the collegiate level. While there are many opportunities for our athletes to play at the next level, athletic scholarships are limited and are available primarily for the “elite athlete”.

The term “scholarship” very often has been used in an all-inclusive way. It should be noted that the term “scholarship” is referred to in different ways throughout varied sources. It could include any one or combination of other terms, such as financial aid, grants, loans, work study program

and aid from private or government sources. Very often the amount and method of scholarship is dependent on the level or division of play at which a particular college competes. It is important for the student-athlete and parents to understand:

1. The type of financial package (if applicable) being discussed; and,
2. The obligations, terms, conditions and longevity of such arrangements; and,
3. How the financial package compares to the actual cost of attending the institution.

The following associations govern the conduct of collegiate athletics, the eligibility of the student-athlete and the availability of athletic scholarships:

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

There are other associations of colleges and conferences that may or may not affiliate with larger associations and abide by their rules. It is important to inquire about the school's affiliation, to insure that eligibility standards are met and that appropriate recruitment guidelines are followed.

Athletes who aspire to participate at the collegiate level and their parents, should discuss potential collegiate opportunities for play with the head varsity coach and guidance counselor in order to determine the "best fit" with respect to schools that match a student-athlete's academic and athletic potential. Although the appropriate time to discuss college options should be at the end of the athlete's junior year, planning for collegiate participation begins much earlier.

### **NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT**

When a graduating senior is offered a partial or full athletic scholarship, there are two national signing days during the student athlete's senior year. The student athletes receive a National Letter of Intent (NLI), which is an official signing of an NCAA contract between the student athlete and the university. Upon signing of the agreement (NLI), the student must participate at the university or lose the offered athletic scholarship.

Receiving an athletic scholarship is a monumental accomplishment. In February, we honor those students with a short ceremony at the high school attended by the student athletes. Coaches, administrators, parents, grandparents are welcome to attend. Students must be members of the school team in their senior year in order to be eligible for the ceremony. The school team must be the same sport as the offered scholarship. Students must present their NLI contract to the athletic director or representative. If a student athlete is getting an athletic scholarship but has not received the actual contract prior to the ceremony, the college coach can contact the athletic office verifying the NLI intentions. Confirmations of the contracts need to be finalized two weeks prior to the ceremony.

Since Ivy League schools and military academies cannot offer athletic scholarships, students committed to participate and verified by the university coach (guaranteed a roster position) are eligible for the NLI ceremony.

We also want to celebrate the student athletes that did not receive an athletic scholarship but intend on playing their chosen sport in college. A group picture is taken in May and submitted to the local newspaper along with student's names, sport and university they will attend. Students are asked to wear their chosen university t shirt, sweat shirt or hat.

## **ACADEMIC PREPARATION FOR THE COLLEGE-BOUND ATHLETE**

The process is a long and selective one and the athlete must be fully prepared for the expectations and demands of participation at the collegiate level. Academic eligibility must be planned for well in advance. Athletes need to be aware of the academic requirements for collegiate eligibility when they enter the ninth grade. Communication with guidance counselors is essential, as core course requirements and standards for academic eligibility at the collegiate level must be met.

Student-athletes must have eligibility for practice and competition in their freshman year certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Information brochures/forms have been made available to the guidance offices. The NCAA Clearinghouse reviews required core courses and high school transcripts for all prospective Division I and Division II student-athletes (not Division III). An athlete must submit a “Student Release Form”, along with his/her official high school transcripts, ACT and/or SAT scores and a payment fee, to the Clearinghouse. After review, a preliminary certification report will be made available to the student-athlete and the colleges that he or she has selected to receive this information. After graduation, the Clearinghouse will review the final transcript and make a final certification decision. This process must be initiated, through the Guidance Counselor, at the beginning of the student-athlete’s senior year.

The standards established for NCAA eligibility by the Clearinghouse are different for Division I and Division II and are occasionally modified. It is essential that parents and student-athletes consult with their counselors to discuss future goals, plan the academic portfolio and obtain the following:

- Freshman-Eligibility Standards for NCAA institutions
- A copy of the “Guide For College-Bound Student-Athletes and Their Parents”
- NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete (beginning of their senior year)
- Core Course GPA – A program paid for the Smithtown Booster Club that will track high school course work for athletes to ensure that they will meet NCAA clearinghouse requirements. Access to the free program is at [www.CoreCourseGPA.com](http://www.CoreCourseGPA.com). More information is available on the Athletic Department website.

## **ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE COLLEGE-BOUND ATHLETE**

Playing at the collegiate level requires an intense commitment to a sport. “Scholarships” only come to those that are considered to be “elite” athletes with outstanding accomplishments. Some of the components that athletes can do to increase their potential as a collegiate recruit are as follows:

- Participate on other interscholastic teams year-round if possible. This gives the student-athlete a wider overall perspective and a more impressive resume. College coaches prefer athletes that are involved in two or more sports.
- Participate in summer sport camps.
- Try out for all-star or select teams, such as the Empire State Games Teams, etc., to gain added exposure and visibility.
- Have your current skills evaluated on an ongoing basis.
- Participate in outside community and recreational teams.



- Participate in effective strength and conditioning programs year-round to insure peak performance.
- Maintain peak performance standards with a commitment to appropriate nutrition.
- Involvement with community, religious organizations, school on a voluntary basis.

When athletes begin play at the varsity level, they should begin to develop a sports resume that includes a listing of their athletic achievements, awards, media coverage, etc., in addition to their academic accomplishments. This resume should be updated periodically.

More specific information about the recruiting process, eligibility guidelines, the athletic profile, campus visitations, and planning for the college-bound athlete is available in “The Guide For College-Bound Student-Athletes and Their Parents” which can be obtained from high school guidance counselors.

### **PARENT-COACH RELATIONSHIP**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each role, we are better able to accept the actions of others and provide greater benefit to the students. As parents, when your children become involved in a school’s sports programs, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication between coach, parent and student-athlete.

### **COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD’S COACH**

- Expectations the coach has for the team.
- Location and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, i.e., special equipment, off-season conditioning responsibilities, etc.
- Procedure should your child be injured during participation.
- Team rules and guidelines.

### **COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM ATHLETES**

- Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance.
- Additional health concerns.
- Special concerns in regard to the coach’s philosophy and/or expectations.
- Prompt reporting of injuries.

As your children become involved in an athletic program, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way that your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is of paramount importance. Parents are urged to encourage their child to discuss issues/concerns with their coach. This step is an important aspect in confidence building, self-esteem, personal responsibility and maturation.

## **APPROPRIATE PARENTAL CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH**

- The treatment of your child — mentally and physically.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's academics or behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you desire. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be in the best interests of the team and for all students involved. Certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as the following, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

## **ISSUES NOT TO BE DISCUSSED WITH THE COACH**

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes on the team

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the 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 of concern.

## **PROCEDURES TO DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH THE COACH**

- Call the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, call the athletic office to ask for assistance in setting up the meeting with the coach.
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Please take into consideration the coach's responsibilities at this time, as the coach is responsible for the supervision and safety of all athletes involved in the program, before, during and after an activity.

If meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution of your concerns, call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.

## **SOME RULES FOR PARENTS**

The following is a suggested 'code of conduct' for parents:

- Remain seated in spectator areas during competition.
- Do not yell instructions or criticisms to the children.
- Do not make derogatory comments to players, other parents or fans, officials or administrators.
- Do not interfere with your child's coach.

- Be willing to let the coach be responsible for your child during the duration of the contest.
- If necessary, remind those around you of the rules.
- Provide unconditional love, acceptance and emotional support, regardless of the game's outcome.

## **CREED FOR COMPETITORS**

### 1. PLAY HARD

After the contest is over, you can say, "I gave everything I've got physically. I fought my heart out."

### 2. PLAY SMART

Keep your poise. Be intent. Stay focused. Concentrate only on the game.

### 3. PLAY FAIR

Fight clean. Obey both the letter and the spirit of the rules. No hedging, no cheating.

### 4. PLAY TO WIN

Never concede. Never quit. Never give up or give in. Maintain your self-respect, and respect your opponents by giving an all-out effort.

### 5. HAVE FUN

Don't shrink from the fear of defeat or let the bitter taste of defeat destroy your love of the game.

### 6. KEEP PERSPECTIVE

When the game is on, it is important that you win. After it is over, it makes no ethical difference whether you won or lost. Self-worth is not predicated on the vagaries of victory or defeat. What does matter most is that you love the challenge of the game, savor the camaraderie of your teammates, and earn the respect of your opponents; namely, that you have been true to your best self.