

HANDBOOK FOR ELIZABETHTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT STUDENT-ATHLETES AND PARENTS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES



Introduction

Welcome to the Elizabethtown Area School District, EASD, athletic program. Every school year, numerous student-athletes participate in EASD interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12. The administration and coaching staff are proud of the life experiences and life lessons that can be taught through participating on the Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic teams.

The goal of this *Handbook for Student-Athletes and Parents of Student-Athletes* is to effectively communicate the roles of the administration, coaches, players and parents so that we may work together to make the athletic programs successful for student-athletes. Additionally, this handbook will present Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, PIAA, and EASD athletic policies, procedures and guidelines to ensure the success of Elizabethtown Area athletic programs' administered.

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I. A Note to Parents

Being a parent can be rewarding and challenging. The rewards and responsibilities of parenting are often complicated by being a parent of a student-athlete. Hopefully this handbook will assist your understanding of the EASD interscholastic mission, the benefits of Elizabethtown Area athletics, the Elizabethtown Area athletic program objectives, offerings, policies, procedures and guidelines, and insight into some of the responsibilities of being a student-athlete and a parent of an Elizabethtown Area student-athlete. Please take the time to review the information in this handbook with your child. If you or your child(ren) have questions regarding information in this handbook, please contact the athletic office at (717) 367-1533 and we will be glad to assist you.

II. Interscholastic Program Mission Statement

The EASD athletic programs have been developed to provide all students with an opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities. The mission of these programs is to develop student participants who value and promote teamwork and community pride.

The mission of the Elizabethtown Area School District interscholastic programs is divided into two components. The first component is that all Elizabethtown Area students should have opportunities to participate in Elizabethtown Area extracurricular activities. When a student considers all of the offerings in the athletic, theater, music, and service programs, they should be able to find an extracurricular activity that can meet their unique needs.

The second component is development of skills and techniques so that Elizabethtown Area students and teams can be competitive in their endeavors. Elizabethtown Area coaches will provide your child and your child's team with quality, age appropriate instruction and teaching, that will focus on teaching skills, techniques and game strategies.

III. Objectives of Participation for Student-Athletes

Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletics are an extension of the curricular programs. Student-athletes participating in the Elizabethtown Area School District athletic program should receive the following benefits from participation.

1. To provide opportunities that will allow the program to serve as a laboratory where students may cope with problems and handle situations similar to those encountered under conditions prevailing in the contemporary world. The experience should provide adequate and natural opportunities to:
 - Grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially;
 - Acquire and develop special skills in activities of each student's choice;
 - Be taught that team success is more important than individual success;
 - Coaching and student leadership and supervision that stresses self-discipline, self-motivation, excellence, and the ideals of good sportsmanship which teach winning and losing with honor;
 - Participate on athletic programs that will generate interest and a feeling of unity for the student body, faculty and community;
 - Develop high levels of fitness.
2. To provide opportunities for students' to experience team and individual success.
3. To create a desire to succeed and excel in all areas of the student-athletes life.

4. To provide for the student's worthy use of leisure time now and in the future.

IV. Elizabethtown Area School District Board Approved Athletics Teams

The Elizabethtown Area School District offers **25** senior high and **12** junior high athletic teams as School Board approved interscholastic athletic team, additionally, **1** Club Team is offered for participation. They are as followed:

	<u>Senior High</u>	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Football	Boys Basketball	Girls Soccer
Boys Soccer	Girls Basketball	Boys Lacrosse
Girls Volleyball	Coed Rifle	Boys Track and Field
Cheerleading	Girls Swimming	Girls Track and Field
Girls Field Hockey	Boys Swimming	Baseball
Girls Tennis	Cheerleading	Softball
Coed Cross Country	Coed Indoor Track	Boys Tennis
Coed Golf	Wrestling	Boys Volleyball
	Coed Bowling	

	<u>Junior High</u>	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Football	Boys Basketball	Girls Soccer
Boys Soccer	Girls Basketball	Boys Track and Field
Cheerleading	Wrestling	Girls Track and Field
Girls Field Hockey	Cheerleading	
Coed Cross Country		

	<u>Club (Senior High)</u>	
<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
	Coed Ice Hockey	

V. Relationships

A. The Parent-Player Relationship

The attitude of the parent is the most influential factor in determining if a student-athlete has a rewarding interscholastic athletic experience or a disappointing interscholastic athletic experience. The attitude of the parent is more influential than the talent level of the student-athlete, the amount of playing time, the attitude of the coach, the attitude of the players or the team's win-loss record.

“Many student-athletes describe the worst 15 minutes of the day as the ride home in the car after the practice or competition, due to the parent’s negative attitude toward the student-athlete, the coach or the teammates.”

What student-athletes need the most is unconditional love and support from the parents no matter what happens during practices or games.

B. The Player-Coach Relationship

Through the growth of youth sports during the past 25 years, many adults believe they understand or perhaps know more than Elizabethtown Area coaches. Many parents believe they have a degree of expertise from playing or coaching experience. While this knowledge may heighten your appreciation of the sport, as a parent, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. A parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a profound effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in front of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and will likely carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as a parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

C. The Parent-Coach Relationship

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare and success. You want the best for him or her. But the athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial to the success of the team.

Should you have questions or concerns, do not approach the coach at the conclusion of a contest or during a practice. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and may be very emotional. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach the meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities of a coach is to meet with the team at the conclusion of a contest. Student-athletes should not pause to talk to parents immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in interscholastic athletics.

D. Parent-Official Relationship

The age-old question often used by irate fans to coaches and athletic directors is "Where did you find these officials?" Each sport in the PIAA (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association) has an "officials' assigner" who assigns PIAA officials for every game in that sport for the entire season.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have an interest in which team wins the contest. It is important to know that a game cannot be played without a PIAA certified official(s).

As in any vocation, there are average, good, and great officials. However, each official is doing their best to provide a safe, unbiased and structured environment for the student-athletes.

As a parent, nothing positive will result in yelling at the officials. In fact, many negative actions can occur by a parent yelling at the officials. They are: 1) You will appear foolish, 2) You will embarrass your child, 3) You will set a poor example that others may follow, escalating a negative environment; and 4) You may be removed from observing the competition.

E. Parent-Athletic Director Relationship

The Athletic Director supervises the administration of all senior high and junior high athletic teams. Prior to approaching the Athletic Director regarding the management of an athletic team, a parent should first speak to the coach. If the parent is not satisfied with the discussion with the coach, the parent may request a meeting with the

athletic director and the coach. However, the issues of playing time, techniques and strategies are not appropriate topics of discussion with the Coach or Athletic Director.

VI. PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION PLAN

Both parenting and coaching can be difficult vocations. By better understanding each other, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to student-athletes. As parents, when your children become involved in Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic teams, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on you and your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's athletic team.

The mission of the Elizabethtown Area athletic program is to develop student participants who value and promote teamwork and community pride. With both coaches and parents communicating effectively, the Elizabethtown Area athletic programs can reach their mission.

A. Communication Parents Should Expect from Elizabethtown Area Athletic Coaches

1. Philosophy of the coach and the Elizabethtown Area School District athletic program.
2. Expectations the coach has for student-athletes.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team and school requirements – behavioral and academic.
5. Procedure if student-athletes are injured during participation and insurance information.
6. Actions that could lead to discipline, which may result in the suspension/termination of student-athlete participation.

B. How to Handle an Athletic Team Concern

1. Encourage your child to speak directly to the coach. Many concerns can be resolved through this process.
2. Contact the coach to schedule an appointment.
3. If a coach cannot be reached, contact the athletic office. We will assist you in arranging a meeting.
4. Do not present your concerns to a coach before a contest, after a contest (This can be emotional time for both the coach and the parent) or during a practice.
5. If the meeting with the coach does not provide a resolution, contact the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.
6. If resolution is not achieved after meeting with the Athletic Director, contact an administrator of the Elizabethtown Area School District.

C. Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

1. Treatment of your child.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior or academic performance

It is difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you would hope. Coaches are professionals and they make judgments based on what they believe to be best for the team. As you have seen from the above list, certain topics can be and should be discussed with a coach. Other topics, such as playing time, coaching strategies, and concerns about other student-athletes should be left to the discretion of the coach.

D. Communication Elizabethtown Area Athletic Coaches Expect from Parents

1. Express concerns directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any scheduling conflicts well in advance.

As students participate on athletic teams, they can 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 parents and students expect. At these times discussion with the coach is encouraged.

E Expectations Coaches Expect from Elizabethtown Area Parents

1. Support the efforts of all student-athletes;
2. Work to promote a positive environment that is conducive to the development of student-athletes;
3. Become familiar with and review philosophy, rules, and regulations pertaining to Elizabethtown athletics;
4. Communicate any concerns in a timely manner, following the proper protocol;
5. Treat all coaching personnel with courtesy and respect, and insist your child do the same;
6. Understand that team goals are more important than individual goals.

VII. Requirements for Students to Participate On An EASD Interscholastic Athletic Teams

It is important to understand that participation on an EASD interscholastic athletic team is a privilege not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership on the team means accepting all the responsibilities of a student-athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to be competitive, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

Below is a list of requirement for students to participate on EASD athletic teams.

1. The student must be enrolled in EASD, or considered a Home School or Cyber School student or in an approved School Board Cooperative Agreement program.
2. The student must be in grades 7-12.
3. The student must meet age requirements. A student-athlete may not participate on a junior high athletic team when he or she is 16 years old before July 1 of the year preceding the start of the school year. A student-athlete may not participate on a senior high athletic team if he or she is 19 years old before July 1 of the year preceding the start of the school year.
4. The student must have a pre-participation athletic physical (C.I.P.E.E Form) and if the student playing a second or third season in the same school year, a recertification card signed by a parent/physician. Pre-participation and re-certification forms are available in the main office of the junior high schools and in the athletic office in the senior high school. A twenty-dollar processing fee must accompany all sports physical forms (*this fee is required only once during the respective school year*).
5. The student must meet academic eligibility requirements according to the parameters established by the P.I.A.A. and Elizabethtown Area rules regarding eligibility. At the junior high, the student-athlete may not be failing more than two credits to participate. At the Senior High the student-athlete may not be failing more than one course (that meets daily) to participate, or if only carrying

three courses all three courses must be in satisfactory standing. In the Senior High, the student-athlete must earn six credits in the previous school year to be eligible to participate at the start of the fall season.

6. A student must exhibit good behavior in the classroom and on the athletic team. A coach has the authority to deny a student-athlete from trying-out or participating on an Elizabethtown Area athletic team if the student-athlete has exhibited behavior that is detrimental to management and/or cohesion of the team.
7. A student and parent must sign the *Athletic Responsibility Acknowledgement Form (See page 17)*. The Athletic Responsibility Acknowledgement Form communicates to the student-athlete and the parent the following information:
 - The student is expected to comply with PIAA rules, EASD rules and team rules.
 - The student is responsible to return the school issued athletic equipment at the end of the season in good condition or pay for a replacement.
 - The student is not to use or possess tobacco, alcohol, narcotics and steroids during the athletic season.
 - The physical risks involved in participating on an interscholastic athletic team.
 - The system used for academic eligibility.
 - The student and parent have read this handbook.
8. School Attendance: All student-athletes should arrive on time for school everyday. Student athletes must be in school by 10:45 in the Senior High and Junior High to be considered eligible to participate in that day's contest/practice/scrimmage, unless approved by a medical professional.
9. Equipment and Uniforms: It is the responsibility of each student-athlete to take care of all equipment and uniforms assigned to them. Any equipment or uniform not turned in at the end of the season will result in an office obligation and potentially a cost to replace the lost or non-returned items.

VIII. Procedure for Suspension or Dismissal from an Interscholastic Team

The Constitution guarantees that the government cannot take away a person's basic rights to 'life, liberty or property, without due process of law.'

Participation on an interscholastic athletic team in the Elizabethtown Area Schools is a privilege and the participants must maintain the right to represent Elizabethtown Area Schools by conducting themselves in such a way that the image of the EASD would not be tarnished in any manner. Any participant whose conduct is judged to reflect a discredit upon himself/herself, the team, or the Elizabethtown Schools, whether or not such an activity takes place during or outside the school hours and session of the sport season, will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the coach, the Athletic Director, and/or the school principal.

Each coach will have discipline rules for various infractions, such as inattention to directions, horseplay, tardiness to practice, etc. These rules shall be put in writing and approved by the school principal and Athletic Director. They shall also be on file in the Athletic Directors Office.

A. Temporary Suspension from an Interscholastic Athletic Team

Temporary suspensions will be made by the coach of the sport, Athletic Director, and/or school administrator. The Athletic Director and/or administrator will confer with the coach before action is taken. Any situation that may involve suspension from school will be handled by the school administration. Causes for temporary suspension may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Grades
2. Personal misconduct student-athlete will be ineligible for practice or contests during periods (either in or out of school) of suspension.
3. Unexcused absences from meetings, practices or contests.
4. Violations of athletic policies.
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Temporary suspension may also be invoked during that period of investigation in which a student-athlete may be removed from the athletic program.*

B. Permanent Suspension from an Interscholastic Athletic Team

For the purpose of interscholastic athletics the suspension shall: be in effect the remainder of the athletic season in which the violation occurs (fall athletes may participate in the winter season, winter athletes may participate in the spring season, spring athletes may participate in the next fall season). Students who have been have an expulsion from the EASD may not participate in any athletic team until the School Board and the Administration have reinstated that student.

C. Procedure for Suspension or Dismissal

1. The coach or advisor will notify the Athletic Director or other approved administrator of the alleged violation and recommend action.
2. The student-athlete will be verbally advised by the school district administrator of the alleged violation.
3. The student-athlete will be given a chance to explain and justify their action and has the option to have a parent/guardian at this conference.
4. If the administration determines that a suspension is warranted the student and parents will be notified.

IX. General Information for Parents of Elizabethtown Area Student-Athletes

A. Defined Season of Elizabethtown Area Interscholastic Athletic Teams

Unlike many club or youth teams, Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic teams have a defined season, with a definite start date and end date. During the defined season, an Elizabethtown Area student-athlete is expected to make the Elizabethtown Area athletic team a priority over all other Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic teams, club teams or youth teams. If an Elizabethtown Area student-athlete cannot make the commitment to make the Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic team a priority, the student-athlete may be asked to not participate on the Elizabethtown Area interscholastic athletic team. Any conflict should be discussed with the Elizabethtown Area coach in advance.

For senior high teams, the fall start date is always three weeks prior to Labor Day. For all seasons, the junior high teams are permitted to begin one week after the senior high teams (*as per the Lancaster-Lebanon League Rules and Regulations*). On the following page are the start dates for the 2007-2009 seasons.

Senior High (Varsity, Junior Varsity)

junior High (Junior High Varsity, Junior High Junior Varsity)

Fall – Aug. 13, 2007, Aug. 18, 2008
Winter – Nov. 12, 2008, Nov. 10, 2009
Spring – March 3, 2008, March 2, 2009

Aug 20, 2007, Aug. 25, 2008
Nov. 12, 2008, Nov. 10, 2009
March 10, 2008, March 9, 2009

B. Preseason Information from Coaches

All Elizabethtown Area coaches will provide parents with information regarding the season. This information will include, but is not limited to, practice and game schedules, team guidelines, and coaches' contact information. Some coaches may have a parents' meeting and other coaches may provide the student-athlete with an information packet to be given to the parent.

C. Freshman Playing Varsity

If there is not an opportunity to play on a team at the junior high (golf, tennis, baseball, softball, lacrosse, rifle, bowling, swimming, and volleyball) freshman student-athletes do not need special permission to try-out and play for the varsity and/or junior varsity team. However, for the sports that have junior high athletic teams, the Elizabethtown Area administration must give permission for an exceptionally talent freshman student-athlete to participate on the senior high team. The recommendation is provided to the administration from the head varsity coach. The determining factors of the administration are the academic performance, the athletic performance and the discipline history of the freshman student-athlete.

D. Injuries to Athletes

Elizabethtown Area has a full-time certified athletic trainer on duty during home games/contests and practice sessions. The trainer is a high-trained allied health care professional who has an in-depth knowledge of human kinesiology and sports medicine. The Elizabethtown Area athletic trainer specializes in the prevention of injuries, first aid, and rehabilitation of athletic injuries.

When an Elizabethtown Area student-athlete is injured during a practice or competition, the student-athlete should seek the care of the Elizabethtown Area athletic trainer immediately. The certified athletic trainer will evaluate the injury and determine if the student-athlete needs to be referred to a physician.

Once the student-athlete has been evaluated by the physician, the student-athlete must submit to the Elizabethtown Area athletic trainer the documentation regarding the diagnosis, prescribed treatment and the date the student-athlete may resume participation. Without this documentation, the athlete may not participate in practices or competitions.

In no circumstance will the athletic trainer act as a physician, and will not provide the parent or the student-athlete with advice as to how to cure, prevent, or administer injury care.

E. Attendance at Practice and Athletic Contests/Meetings

It is an understanding that Student-athletes will be present at all practices, team meeting, contests, and special occasions unless excused by the head coach. This includes awards assemblies and banquets.

F. Care of School Equipment/Athletic Equipment

The student-athlete is responsible for all equipment issued to him/her. Lost, stolen or damaged equipment must be paid for by the athlete or his/her parent/guardian. All equipment must be turned in at the specified time and day. Failure to comply will result in Administrative actions, i.e., holding of report card, possible participation on further athletic programs or other extra curricular activities.

G. Transportation of Student-Athletes

Participation on an EASD interscholastic athletic team requires the student-athlete to use the Elizabethtown Area School District approved transportation to and from away games. The EASD will provide transportation for all student-athletes in school-authorized vehicles when a contest has been scheduled at an opponent's facility.

All Elizabethtown Area student-athletes must ride the school provided transportation to and away from away games. The only exceptions are: 1) If there is a conflict with an Elizabethtown Area school activity. 2) A family emergency. In both cases, the head coach must be given a written request from the parent prior to the event, and the coach must approve the request. At no times, will a coach or designee of the coach allow a student-athlete to ride home with a person who is not their immediate parent or guardian.

H. The "Big E" Booster Clubs/Parents Groups and Fundraising

The EASD athletic department provides everything necessary for the Elizabethtown Area School District athletic teams to compete and be competitive in the PIAA. These items are: Coaching staff and athletic trainers, uniforms, all necessary equipment, facilities, and transportation to and from away competitions. The "Big E" Booster club and parent organizations may elect to provide the EASD teams with items beyond the necessary items. Often this is done through fundraising. Booster clubs and parent groups must keep in mind that the fundraising is for the "wants" and not the "needs."

I. Position on Hazing

Hazing is an issue that the EASD administration and coaches take very seriously. Hazing is generally defined as "any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a person to join a group, regardless of the person's willingness to participate in the activity." Hazing is a negative activity and works against the Interscholastic Program Mission Statement, the Objectives for Participation. It is not acceptable behavior for anyone associated with the EASD.

There are several misconceptions regarding hazing. One is that hazing includes harmless pranks that can be dismissed as traditions. The truth is that hazing is physically and emotionally harmful for junior high school and high school students. Hazing is a form of abuse. A second misconception is if someone agrees to participate in an activity, it cannot be considered hazing. The truth is that consent of the victim cannot be used as a defense for hazing activities. A third misconception is that hazing teaches respect and develops discipline. The truth is that respect is earned, not taught. Victims of hazing do not respect the individuals responsible for the hazing. Hazing teaches mistrust and creates alienation.

The following steps are taken in the EASD to eliminate hazing:

1. Every head coach is to read the definition of hazing to the team and discuss the destructive nature of hazing and the consequences of hazing. (Team discipline, school discipline and reported to the local police.)

2. If a student-athlete is aware of a hazing incident, the student-athlete is expected to report the incident to a coach or school administrator immediately.
3. If a coach is aware of a hazing incident, the coach must report the incident to a school administrator immediately.
4. All reported incidents of hazing are investigated by school administration.
5. An educational video will be viewed by members of the interscholastic sporting teams, and a discussion will follow by the Athletic Director to answer questions or concerns.

J. Position on Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (United States) states "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." In addition, it is the understanding that the Athletic Director, coaches, and the Principal will do everything possible to provide quality athletic programs, fields, equipment, and other miscellaneous materials for both male and female athletic teams.

Contact Information

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www.nfhs.org

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Elizabethtown Area School District Administrators

Reviewed and Approved by:

(Superintendent)

(Date)

(Principal)

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(Athletic Director)

(Date)

7/5/2007 SMP DOCUMENT OWNER

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