

CLEARFIELD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT ATHLETIC COMMUNICATION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

We are extremely pleased that your son/daughter has chosen to participate in the interscholastic athletic program of the Clearfield Area School District. A goal of the Athletic Department is to provide our student athletes with the best environment in which their extracurricular experiences may be as rewarding as possible. We believe that this goal may not be realized without appropriate lines of communication available to all parties involved.

Concerns/Issues are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. The coaching staff should be given the first opportunity to consider the issues and/or concerns. If a formal complaint is necessary it will be investigated fully and fairly, but before any such complaint is investigated beyond the coach's level, it must be submitted in writing and signed. **Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.**

It should be remembered that it is a privilege to participate in athletics, and academics must come first. If a good academic record is not maintained, eligibility to participate will be denied.

Coaches, student athletes and spectators are representatives of the Clearfield Area School District. Your actions are not only a reflection upon yourselves but your family and community as well. One negative action will be remembered long after any positive actions that have taken place. This "Communication Guide" has been created to assist coaches, parents, administrators and student athletes to communicate more effectively.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Clearfield Area School District in conjunction with its Athletic Department follows the chain of command listed below. We ask that you observe the order of this line of communication if you wish to pursue a concern you have with regard to the athletic program.

You will be referred to the appropriate level if the chain is not followed.

1. Assistant Coach (if applicable) – **Phone call and/or meeting**
2. Head Coach - **Phone call and/or meeting**
3. Athletic Director/ Building Principal (**Written and signed letter required**)
4. Building Principal
5. Superintendent
6. School Board

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR: 765-2401 EXT: 2161

CLEARFIELD AREA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: 765-2401

CLEARFIELD AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: 765-5302

PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIAN TO FOLLOW REGARDING CONCERNS/ISSUES

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and parent/guardian. Such a meeting is encouraged when necessary. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other person's position. Each should be willing to listen. The following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue.

Contact the coach by phone if one was provided to you from the coach or set up an appointment (see list of school phone numbers below) if the coach cannot be reached after a reasonable period of time; call the Athletic Director and an appointment with the coach will be arranged.

IMPORANT: Please do not attempt to confront a coach *before, during or after a practice session or contest.*

The coach's first responsibility is to supervise the team during these times. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. **Meetings at this time do not promote resolution and in fact often escalate the issue.**

What can a parent/guardian do if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution?

Although total agreement may not always be reached, most often such a meeting does afford the opportunity for a productive discussion and better understanding. If the parent/guardian desires to continue through the chain of command after talking to the coach, they must place their concerns in writing and sign the letter. When the Athletic Director receives this document he will contact you for further discussion and he may set up a meeting with you and the coach, to discuss the issue and/or concern. If the parent still desires further communication after this meeting, the Athletic Director will then determine the next appropriate step.

CASD ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

The coaching philosophy at Clearfield Area School District under PIAA sanction is primarily a continuing developmental process. Understanding of this philosophy is imperative on the part of the board of directors, administration, coaching staff, student athletes and parents/guardians for it to be of any value to all participants.

Sports/Extracurricular activities are tools to promote personal growth and development on the part of the students involved. Their perception of themselves as a participant is the most important ingredient to their development. The student athlete and all who claim to be involved must take on a broader understanding and meaning of high school sports and not confuse them with being of the same nature as recreational and intramural activities. Sports at the middle and high school levels, are first regulated by the PIAA and then by our school board as an educational enterprise and not a recreational pursuit.

The objective is to provide a medium by which each athlete will make individual choices and succeed or fail on the basis of their choices, execution and the depth of their commitment.

The goal would be to strive for excellence in performance. All need to realize an athlete's success cannot be based only on the empirical data of a scoreboard. A win or loss only helps in determining how to compete but it does not address the real purpose of competition. Each loss or win should be met equally and honestly as only an evaluation of development. The contest or competition IS the objective, the reason, and the purpose for their participation, NOT the outcome.

A student athlete's success in shaping ability to potential, devotion to coach's philosophy, and making realistic choices in all external areas of athletics will cause him/her to grow and develop into a better functioning young adult who can and will make wise decisions in our modern world based on lessons adapted from sports and competition.

Each competition, each practice, each exposure to sport is a learning experience devoted to the athlete's development. The commitment required to truly receive the greatest rewards of sport is immense as requiring much faith and tremendous desire. The coaches at Clearfield truly hope as many students as possible choose to make the commitment to compete and develop into fine leaders.

PARENT/GUARDIAN- COACH RELATIONSHIP

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a greater benefit to the student athletes. As parents/guardians, when your son/daughter becomes involved in a program you have the right to understand what expectations are going to be placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS/ISSUES TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH

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

As your son/daughter becomes involved in the various athletic programs of the CASD, it is our hope that he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of his/her life. It is important to understand that things may not always go as you or your son/daughter wish. At these times, discussion with the coach may be desirable **and is in fact encouraged** to clear up the issue and avoid any misunderstanding.

INAPPROPRIATE AREAS TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH

- **Playing time/position assignment.**
- **Team strategy/play calling.**
- **Matters concerning other student athletes.**

Many aspects of the highly emotional and dynamic setting of interscholastic athletics are often questioned. These may include decisions made by coaches, administration, officials, athletes, parents and fans. As you have read from the previous list, certain concerns can be and should be discussed with the coach. Other items must be left to the discretion of the coach. Our coaches make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved under the circumstances presented.

COMMUNICATION THAT PARENTS SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH

- Philosophy of the coach.
- Expectations the coach may have for your child and the team.
- Location and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements for example: Fees, special equipment, eligibility, attendance, off-season conditioning.
- Procedure to follow should your child become injured during participation.
- Athletic Policy and any additional rules that may affect your child's participation.
- Requirements to earn a letter.
- The responsibility for lost/outstanding equipment at the end of the season.

COMMUNICATION THAT THE COACH EXPECTS FROM THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENT ATHLETES

- Express concerns/issues directly to the coach first at an appropriate time
- Notify the coach of special needs of the athlete; for example; physical limitations that may not be obvious to the coach

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

THE STUDENT ATHLETE MUST CARRY SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER DEVELOPMENT IN BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPANT. A STUDENT ATHLETE MUST:

- **Remain eligible – academics come first**
- Attempt to absorb the suggestions of the coach
- Be mentally and physically prepared to give your best for the team
- Conduct yourself in a positive manner; you are representing not only yourself, but also your team, family, school and community
- Have faith in the coach's system
- Maintain an atmosphere of mutual dedication and respect in order to achieve the excellence of performance