

Willsboro Central School

Athletic Handbook

Statement of Philosophy

Willsboro Central School District understands that interscholastic athletics are a significant part of the educational process. The combination of academics and athletics enhances the quality of students' lives and expands their options for learning and personal growth. Athletics provide an educational opportunity in which students can learn essential life lessons beyond those that can be learned in an academic classroom.

This reflects our belief that the essential requirement for teamwork, the mental and physical challenges of training and competition, and the experience of winning and losing graciously and respectfully are important life lessons in every student's developmental experience. These lessons will serve students well in their future and beyond.

Developing good character habits requires time and effort. Coaches, parents and other stakeholders can help students develop such habits by continually discussing, modeling, and reinforcing the desired attitudes and beliefs over time.

We also understand that participation on an athletic team or teams demands a commitment that involves both dedication and sacrifice. This is required of not only student athletes, but also the coaches and parents.

Statement of Purpose

This Athletic Code is meant to be a useable, dynamic document to guide the educational process through our school's athletic program. It defines the mission, philosophy, goals and parameters of the program, and the following priority activities:

- 1) Pre-season – Coach and athletes discuss their expectations for the team; defining “success” for the season ahead.
- 2) During the season – physical and character training; striving for excellence in performance and attitude; communicating with parents; encouraging parents and other stakeholders to support and model the character we are trying to instill in students (see “parent’s code” below)
- 3) Post-season – encouraging student athletes to maintain a high level of personal commitment to both physical and character development during their off-season.
- 4) Boundaries – establishing the positive behavioral and achievement expectations, while defining the consequences for behavior that is ‘out of bounds.’

Overall Athletic Program Goals

Therefore the primary goals of the Willsboro Central School District Athletic Program are to:

- Promote personal improvement in skills, physical condition and knowledge of the sport;
- Promote programs of excellence which will lead to success on and off the playing field
- Offer students an enjoyable experience;
- Provide the greatest opportunity possible for athletes to participate in both practice and competitions;

Program Expectations

Modified Level Sports:

At the modified level, maximum participation is the primary goal. The program at this level emphasizes:

Fundamentals of the Game (Skills Development)
Personal Responsibility
Good Sportsmanship

Although winning is not the primary aim of this program, the desire to strive for victory is important. Modified sports are the first stage of preparation for higher levels of competition. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director, will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the athlete.

Junior Varsity Sports

The Junior Varsity program is designed to prepare young athletes for competition at the varsity level. With the increase in competition at this level, we begin to see a corresponding increase on winning as a goal. While adequate playing time is encouraged, the amount of playing time is influenced by skill level and performance. Other factors such as sportsmanship and effort during practice are also taken into consideration. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director, will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the athlete.

Varsity Sports

At the Varsity level of athletics, playing time becomes very competitive. A more aggressive work ethic and a more advanced skill level are expected. Playing time is earned at this level regardless of age or grade. Discipline, responsibility, and working as a unit are still emphasized at the Varsity level. Playing to win is stressed more for a Varsity team. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director, will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the athlete.

Program Requirements

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Participation as an athlete in WCS programs is contingent on appropriate academic and behavioral performance in school. Students, while under disciplinary restriction or academic ineligibility, will not be allowed to participate. Athletes who miss a total of 3 weeks due to Academic Ineligibility will be removed from the team for the remainder of that sports season unless given permission by the Superintendent to remain on the team.

Physical Education

A student athlete is expected to participate in Physical Education classes unless medically excused. Unexcused non-participation in Physical Education classes during a sport season will result in the following consequences:

First Offense - Student will receive a warning.

Second Offense and any subsequent offense – Student will not be able to practice or compete on that day. They may attend the practice or game.

Medical Requirements

Participation in any athletic program at WCS requires that students fulfill the necessary physical examination. Likewise, any athlete who is injured and referred to a physician or other health care provider must receive written clearance to return to participation.

Attendance

Participation in any athletic activity requires daily attendance at school. Willsboro Central School requires students to attend a full day of school to be eligible to participate in an athletic event unless they are excused for one of the following reasons:

Religious Observance or Service, Family Death or Funeral, Professional Appointment, College Visitation, Court Required Appearance, Approved School Field Trip, Approved Work Study Employment or Visitation

Students not in full-day attendance for other reasons will be ineligible to participate on that day unless excused in advance by the Superintendent. In order to practice or play in a game on any school day, you must be in school by the beginning of second period or have a valid excuse, example (doctor's appointment.)

Additionally, student athletes missing practice unexcused the day before a game may not be eligible to participate in the next game. Likewise, students missing three or more practices unexcused will be ineligible for the next game or scrimmage. Student athletes missing or skipping a game, without being excused, will be ineligible for the following two games. Missing a second game or scrimmage, without being excused will result in removal from the team. Inappropriate behavior in practice, on the bus, or at games will generate additional consequences as determined by the individual team coaches and school discipline code. Consequences from coaches may include any of the following: Reduced Playing Time, Suspension, or Removal from the Team (In consultation with the Athletic Director and Superintendent).

It is expected that all WCS student-athletes are willing to make a commitment to their sport, their teammates, and their coach. Therefore, athletes that decide to try out after the scheduled pre-season practice period will not be allowed to participate in scrimmages, non-league contests, or MVAC games until the number of practice sessions missed has been made up. Permission to participate may be granted after a meeting with the athlete, coach and athletic director. It is understood there are always extenuating circumstances, it is the athlete's responsibility to contact his/her coach prior to the beginning of the season for prior approval for any missed practices.

Detention and Suspension

Students on suspension, either In-School or Out-of School, are ineligible to attend or participate on the day of their suspension.

Detention periods will not be counted as "Unexcused" absences from practice and students serving detention will not be automatically ineligible for participation. Determination of participation will be left to the coach's discretion.

Behavior

As representatives of the school and community, WCS athletes are expected to show exemplary behavior. Inappropriate behavior, gestures, or language will generate consequences including any of the following: Reduction of Playing Time, Suspension, or Removal from the Team (In consultation with the Athletic Director and Superintendent). Additionally, because athletic events are school activities, consequences from the district's discipline code may also apply both in school and on the playing field/court.

Transportation

All players will ride to and from all athletic contests on transportation provided by the school district unless specific permission has been obtained from the Superintendent or his designee.

A student may be permitted to ride home with a parent, guardian, or other pre-approved alternate adult. Parents wishing this option must provide written authorization for the alternate adult to transport their child. Likewise, this individual must personally see the coach at the game and must sign a written form releasing the school from any responsibility for the student. Parents should be “on time” to provide transportation for their child after practices and games.

Athletic Dress Code

Our athletes represent both the school and the community. Therefore, athletes are expected to be clean and neat in appearance when representing Willsboro Central School. Specific dress requirements may be set by individual coaches. However, shorts, blue jeans, sweats, T-shirts, and revealing attire is unacceptable.

Equipment and Uniforms

Willsboro Central dedicates significant resources to provide equipment and uniforms for student athletes. Therefore, athletes are expected to take care in maintaining and returning all articles assigned to them. Students and parents will be responsible for the replacement cost of lost or misused items.

Quitting A Sport

Joining an athletic team is a commitment. Students who are designated as team members are expected, barring injury, to complete the season. Any student quitting a team after the season begins is required to meet with the Athletic Director and/or Superintendent before participating in another sport.

Alcohol/Drug Use

Chemical Free Rules:

There will be no use or possession of any tobacco products.

There will be no use or possession of alcoholic beverages.

There will be no use or possession of drugs (except by physician's prescription).

There will be no attendance at any bar or party where tobacco, alcohol or drugs are being illegally used.

Athletes, who go to a party and notice tobacco, alcohol or drugs being illegally used, are required to leave immediately.

**ANY VIOLATION OF THE CHEMICAL FREE RULES WILL
AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF YOUR RIGHTS TO
CAPTAINSHIP.**

Penalties for Violating the Chemical Free Rules

First Offense- Athlete loses eligibility to play in games for 2 consecutive weeks including at least 2 games. Athlete may not attend practices the first week of the suspension.

However, they are required to participate in practices during the second week. If there are not 2 weeks left in the season, then the suspension will be carried over to the next sport season. Student-athlete will be referred for substance abuse counseling.

Second Offense- Suspension from the team for six weeks. If your suspension period extends into another sport season, you will not be allowed to start that sport season and practice until the conclusion of the suspension period.

Third Offense- Dismissal from the team and suspension for 365 days from the time of the dismissal. Before being reinstated into the interscholastic program you must meet with the Superintendent, Athletic Director, and Coach. Your parent(s)/guardian(s) must be present at the meeting.

Initiation/Hazing

Hazing or initiation by Interscholastic Athletic participants is prohibited by the Willsboro Central School. Violation of this rule will result in suspension or possible removal from the team.

Language / Gestures:

Profanity and inappropriate gestures are not permitted at any time. The coach will take whatever action is deemed appropriate.

Sportsmanship:

All athletes and team members will conduct themselves in a mature and sportsmanlike manner at all times, on and off the field, as representatives of the team, athletic program, and school.

Season Defined:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the student will sign **one contract** that will cover the entire athletic sports year. This will begin with the first day of practice for the Fall Season and end with the last day of school in June. **(An athlete's contract will begin with the first sports activity he/she participates in.)**

Health Forms:

Even though only one contract will be signed each sports year, an updated health form must be filled out and returned at the beginning of each season (FALL, WINTER, AND SPRING).

Athletes may not practice until the health form is completed and returned.

Acknowledgement of Risk:

Athletes and their parents/guardians recognize that participation in interscholastic sports involves a risk of injury. In the event of an accident or injury, coaches and other school personnel are hereby authorized to provide first aid and arrange for such other emergency treatment that they consider necessary.

Insurance:

It is the policy of the school district that all expenses for student injuries will be first referred to the insurance company of the parent/guardian/student. Expenses not covered by the parent/guardian/student's insurance can then be referred to the insurance carrier of the school district (Pupil Benefits, Inc.) **Expenses not covered by either will become the final responsibility of the parent/guardian/student. Accidents must be reported in a timely manner. The school insurance will not cover expenses for injuries, which occur as a result of horseplay or fighting.**

Stakeholder Expectations

We desire a Program that develops excellence and positive values. Central to the goals of Willsboro Central School is the belief that interscholastic athletics can and should enhance the character of our youth. We put forth the following as the positive expectations we hold for the primary stakeholders in our Athletic Program:

Coach's Code

We understand that the Athletic Director and Coaches are leaders, and are dedicated to more than the X's and O's of competition. As a professional educator, leader and role model for students, the high school Coach or Athletic Director will:

- Exemplify the highest moral character as a role model for young people.
- Recognize the individual worth and reinforce the self-image of each team member.
- Establish a realistic team goal or vision for each season and communicate that to the athletes and parents.
- Encourage and assist team members to set personal goals to achieve their highest academic potential.
- Support and enforce the athletes' code reflecting the positive values of abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (performance degrading substances).
- Strive to develop the qualities of competence, character, civility and citizenship in each team member.
- Provide a safe, challenging and encouraging environment for practice and competition.
- Gain an awareness of the importance of prevention, care and treatment of athletic injuries.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials.
- Teach and abide by the rules of the game in letter and in spirit.
- Build and maintain ethical relationships with coaches and administrators.
- Strive for excellence in coaching skills and techniques through professional improvement.
- Promote personal fitness and good nutrition.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

Parent's Code

We understand that parents play a vital role in the development of student athletes and the success of our Program. Therefore we encourage parents to:

- Be a positive role model through your own actions to make sure your child has the best athletic experience possible.
- Be a "team" fan, not a "my kid" fan.
- Weigh what your children say; they may slant the truth to their advantage.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups.
- Be respectful of all officials' decisions.
- Don't instruct your children before, during, or after a game, where it may conflict with the coach's plans and strategies.
- Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the contest.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Help your child learn that success is experienced in the development of their skills, and that they can feel good about themselves, win or lose.

- Take time to talk with coaches in an appropriate manner, including proper time and place, if you have a concern. Arrange a private conference with the coach(es) at a time away from the stress of the contest situation. Should a conference not resolve the issue in question, contact that Athletic Director or Superintendent for further consideration.
- Please reinforce our alcohol, tobacco and other drug-free policies by refraining from the use of any such substances before and during athletic contests.
- Remember that a ticket to a school athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest.

Supporter's (other adult stakeholder) Code

We understand that the larger school-community has an interest and investment in the success of our Athletic Program. These other adults in the community can play a key role in reinforcing the positive educational goals of our Program. Therefore we encourage these important Program supporters to:

- Remember that a ticket to a school athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest.
- Be a positive role model through their behavior at athletic contests.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, cheerleaders, and spectators.
- Be respectful of all officials' decisions.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the sport.
- Reinforce our alcohol, tobacco and other drug-free policies by refraining from the use of any such substances before and during athletic contests.

Athlete's Code

We know that less than 5% of high school athletes go on to play team sports at the college level. Therefore, we understand that high school athletics provide a unique opportunity for the development of not only physical conditioning and athletic skill, but also character traits essential for success in life. To that end we challenge every athlete to strive for the following:

Competence – *the necessary level of knowledge and skill to sufficiently train and compete*

- To develop the skills necessary to participate competently in the game.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the rules and conventions of the game.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the strategies of the game.
- To demonstrate a level of physical conditioning and fitness sufficient to participate competently in the game.
- To demonstrate knowledge of healthy behaviors including nutritional issues.
- To abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in order to achieve the positive benefits of interscholastic athletics.

Character - *the pattern of beliefs, attitudes and therefore behavior that relates to moral strength, constitution and essential qualities that embrace the positive values of Willsboro Central School and the Community*

- To be dependable in fulfilling obligations and commitments.

- To accept responsibility for consequences of actions and not to make excuses or blame others.
- To strive to excel.
- To be committed.
- To persevere, give 100% effort and not give up in the face of setbacks.
- To demonstrate truthfulness.
- To play by the rules of the game and not cheat.
- To control anger and frustration and refrain from displays of temper and bad language.
- To accept losing and winning graciously; to congratulate opponents, and refrain from negative behaviors.

Civility – *to demonstrate behavior that exemplifies appropriate respect and concern for others.*

- To practice good manners on and off the field.
- To refrain from trash talk and other put- downs of opponents and teammates.
- To treat all persons respectfully regardless of individual differences, to show respect for legitimate authority (eg. Coaches Officials Captains).
- To be fair and treat others as one wishes to be treated.
- To listen to and try to understand others.
- To be compassionate and sensitive to others and actively support teammates in victory and defeat.

Citizenship – *social responsibility as part of a ‘community.’*

- To be faithful to the ideals of the game including sportsmanship.
- To keep commitments to team.
- To show team spirit, encourage others and contribute to good morale.
- To put the good of the team ahead of personal gain.
- To work well with teammates to achieve team goals.
- To accept responsibility and set a good example for teammates, younger athletes, fans and school community.

The Rest of the Story

Consequences:

This athletic code has been developed to guide student athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators toward the positive values and experiences that can come through athletics. In an effort to support these goals, it is necessary to have consequences for inappropriate behavior or actions. Therefore, the following consequences may occur for violations of the athletic code.

1. Reduction of playing time in contests
2. Suspension for one or more contests
3. Ineligibility to participate for given period of time (Day, Contest, Season, Year)
4. Removal from the team (In consultation with Athletic Director & Superintendent)

Additional discipline as dictated by the school discipline code.

Disclaimer

No document can foresee all potential situations. Therefore, any confusion over meaning and/or any issues not covered in this document will be referred to the Superintendent for resolution.

