

Susquehanna Community School District

Athletic Handbook



SUSQUEHANNA
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

SUSQUEHANNA, PA

Philosophy of the Athletic Program

The Susquehanna Community School District firmly believes that a student's education is the main priority of the school and that the athletic program has been designed to enhance the overall educational experience for students. The Susquehanna Community School District is committed to an interscholastic athletic program that provides the individual student the privilege of participating in interscholastic athletics. The athletic program seeks to instill and reinforce scholarship and academic excellence. Integrity, fairness, respect for self and others, and dedication to overall success are the keystones of all district interscholastic sports programs at Susquehanna Community. All interscholastic athletic programs will be conducted in accordance with regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), and the Susquehanna Community School District policies and guidelines.

Susquehanna Community code of ethics in athletics for student athletes.

Commitment to Education

- I will understand that my education is the most important aspect of my life, and my participation in athletics will not take precedence over my academic obligations.
- I will prioritize my academic responsibilities and maintain the highest standards of academic achievement.

Respect for Others

- I will respect my teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and supporters at all times.
- I will show respect for the rules of the game and follow them to the best of my ability.
- I will be courteous and kind, whether I win or lose, and handle all situations with grace and dignity.

Accountability

- I will take responsibility for my actions and behaviors, both positive and negative, and will strive to improve myself every day.
- I will adhere to all team rules and the expectations set by my coaches and school staff.

Teamwork and Cooperation

- I will support and encourage my teammates, and contribute to building a positive team environment.
- I will put the success of the team above personal accolades and work together to achieve our goals.

Leadership and Positive Influence

- I will be a positive role model for my peers, younger athletes, and others in the school community.
- I will demonstrate leadership by maintaining a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and ethical behavior in all situations.

Athlete Code of Ethics

- Athletes represent their school and their community. All athletes will display respect to coaches, teammates, opposing teams, and officials.
- Athletes will conduct themselves appropriately before and after contests.
- Remain tidiness of facilities, both home and away. Facilities shall include: locker rooms, weight rooms, buses, competition venues.
- Comply with all school, league, and PIAA rules.

Chain of command

In the event of an issue or problem, a student athlete should follow the chain of command to report an issue. The Susquehanna Community School District fully supports and promotes self advocacy for all student athletes and encourages student athletes to speak to their coaches about issues. In the event a student athlete feels that the issue involves the coach, they can speak to the athletic director first to report an issue.

Coaches

Athletic Director

Building Principal

Superintendent of schools

Board of Education

Academic Policy

PIAA rules state that to be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must be passing **four full credit courses**. Students not passing four major courses are ineligible to compete or attend practice or games for the week following the reporting period. Coaches and advisors may not deviate from this policy. Students are to use periods of ineligibility to improve their grades and perform academic responsibilities. Students may attend home or away games as spectators, but not as representatives of a Susquehanna Community School District athletic team or program.

Students must have passed at least four full-credit subjects during the previous marking period. If a student fails to meet this requirement, he/she will lose eligibility for fifteen school days of the next grading period, beginning on the first day report cards are issued, per PIAA policy. Eligibility for the first grading period is based on the students' final grades from the preceding school year. Students whose work does not meet the

standards for eligibility, who attend summer school and correct their deficiencies, shall be eligible.

Student Athlete Attendance Policy

Students must be in attendance and/or arrive by 11:45 AM in order to be eligible to participate in any after school curricular activity or extracurricular activity unless prior administrative approval was given for arriving late. This includes but is not limited to after school practices, competitions, or performances. Students leaving early or arriving late due to a Doctor's appointment must provide an appropriate medical excuse for the physician's office either on the same or following school day. Students leaving school early due to illness and students absent from school due to an illness are not allowed to participate in any extracurricular activity after school on that day. Students must arrive by 11:45 AM and provide an appropriate excuse to the attendance office before commencing on their school day.

Students must be in school prior to 11:45 am and may not leave school prior to the conclusion of their regular school day in order to take part in extracurricular activities on that day. Students who leave school for a medical appointment may participate in an extracurricular activity that evening if they provide a copy of a medical excuse to their advisor/coach. This note must show the student made a reasonable attempt to minimize their time out of school. A copy of this excuse note must be turned into the Main Lobby office on the following day.

MAXIMUM AGE RULE (PIAA Handbook)

A student shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition upon attaining the age of nineteen years with the following exception: if the age of 19 is attained on or after July 1, the student shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete through that school year. A student of a junior high/middle school wherein interscholastic athletic competition is limited to grades seven and eight shall be ineligible to compete in an Inter-School

Practice, Scrimmage, or Contest upon attaining the age of 15 with the following exceptions: 1) If the age of 15 is attained on or after July 1, the student shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete through that school year. 2) If the age of 16 is attained on or after July 1, the student shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete with students in the ninth grade. A student of a junior high/middle school embracing the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades shall be ineligible to compete in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, or Contest upon attaining the age of 16 years, with the following exception: If the age of 16 is attained on or after July 1, the student shall be eligible, age-wise, to compete through that school year.

Pre-season/ In-season/ Post- Season Protocols

Student Requirements to participate in athletics before the season.

- Registration for a specific sport.
- Prior to the first official day of a respective sport season, student-athletes must complete the *PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation*. These forms must be completed and submitted to the **Athletic Office** prior to participation.
- The head coach or advisor of each program shall determine the official cutoff date in regard to students joining a sport or activity if the season has already begun. Coaches and advisors are encouraged to allow students to join after the “official” start date because it has the potential to improve each and every program and allows undecided students to participate.

Student requirements to participate in athletics during the season.

- Meet grade requirements for weekly grade checks.
- Meet grade requirements for the previous marking period.
- Abide by Policy 247 Hazing

- Meet behavior requirements under policy 122 (specifically related to ISS and OSS).
 - ** The Susquehanna Community School District administration and school board reserve the right to remove a student athlete from competition for a period of time or season if they feel the student is not meeting ethical and behavioral requirements**

Student requirements postseason.

- Hand in all equipment and uniforms that are school issued (if items are not returned, they must be paid for prior to being eligible to participate in another sport or activity).
- Complete post season survey
- ** Until these two requirements are met, the student can not participate in another sport or activity**

Mandatory Playing Time

For student athletes in some sports at the junior high and junior varsity, there will be a playing time minimum. Playing time minimums are as follows if there are less than 15 athletes on the roster:

JV boys and girls basketball: no playing time minimum

Jr. High boys and girls basketball: 2 minutes of non-consecutive playing time.

Jr. High/ JV football: one (1) defensive series or one (1) offensive series.

Jr. High/ JV baseball/softball: one (1) inning in the field and one (1) at bat.

Junior Varsity Volleyball: for a combined total of 10 points in one game, using the rally scoring method.

Practice

- Practices are **MANDATORY**.
- Practices are approximately 2 hours per day 5-6 times a week.
- Practices may be on the weekends or holidays.

- Missed practices, regardless of the reason, may result in reduced playing time. This includes a student athlete potentially not receiving the mandatory minimum playing time due to missed practice/ practices.
- Student athletes who maintain a job during their season, must understand that practices are still mandatory to attend. Communication with a student athletes coach may help resolve scheduling issues.

Policy 247 Hazing

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

Definitions

Hazing occurs when a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a student with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to do any of the following:

Violate federal or state criminal law.

1. Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the student to a risk of emotional or physical harm.
2. Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements.
3. Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.

4. Endure brutality of a sexual nature.
5. Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.

Aggravated hazing occurs when a person commits an act of hazing that results in serious bodily injury or death to the student and:

The person acts with reckless indifference to the health and safety of the student; or

1. The person causes, coerces or forces the consumption of an alcoholic liquid or drug by the student.

Organizational hazing occurs when an organization intentionally, knowingly or recklessly promotes or facilitates hazing.

Any activity, as described above, shall be deemed a violation of this policy regardless of whether:

1. The consent of the student was sought or obtained, or
2. The conduct was sanctioned or approved by the school or organization.

Student activity or organization means any activity, society, corps, team, club or service, social or similar group, operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by the district, whose members are primarily students or alumni of the organization.

For purposes of this policy, **bodily injury** shall mean impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

For purposes of this policy, **serious bodily injury** shall mean bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.

Authority

The Board prohibits hazing in connection with any student activity or organization regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school property or outside of school hours.

No student, parent/guardian, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall engage in, condone or ignore any form of hazing.

The Board encourages students who believe they, or others, have been subjected to hazing to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

Discrimination/Harassment

Every report of alleged hazing that can be interpreted at the outset to fall within the provisions of policies addressing potential violations of laws against discrimination or harassment shall be

handled as a joint, concurrent investigation into all allegations and coordinated with the full participation of the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator. If, in the course of a hazing investigation, potential issues of discrimination or harassment are identified, the Title IX Coordinator shall be promptly notified, and the investigation shall be conducted jointly and concurrently to address the issues of alleged discrimination or harassment as well as the incidents of alleged hazing.

Delegation of Responsibility

Students, parents/guardians, coaches, sponsors, volunteers and district employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and shall report such conduct to the building principal or designee.

When a student's behavior indicates a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community or others, district staff shall report the student to the threat assessment team, in accordance with applicable law and Board policy.

Guidelines

In addition to posting this policy on the district's publicly accessible website, the district shall inform students, parents/guardians, sponsors, volunteers and district employees of the district's policy prohibiting hazing, including district rules, penalties for violations of the policy and the program established by the district for enforcement of the policy by means of distribution of written policy, publication in handbooks, presentation at an assembly, verbal instructions by the coach or sponsor at the start of the season or program and posting of notice/signs.

This policy, along with other applicable district policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, shall be provided to all school athletic coaches and all sponsors and volunteers affiliated with a student activity or organization, prior to coaching an athletic activity or serving as a responsible adult supervising, advising, assisting or otherwise participating in a student activity or organization, together with a notice that they are expected to read and abide by the policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct.

Complaint Procedure

A student who believes that they have been subject to hazing is encouraged to promptly report the incident to the building principal or designee.

Students are encouraged to use the district's report form, available from the building principal, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

The Board directs that verbal and written complaints of hazing shall be provided to the building principal or designee, who shall promptly notify the Superintendent or designee of the allegations and determine who shall conduct the investigation. Allegations of hazing shall be investigated promptly, and appropriate corrective or preventive action be taken when allegations are substantiated. The Board directs that any complaint of hazing brought pursuant to this policy shall also be reviewed for conduct which may not be proven to be hazing under this policy but merits review and possible action under other Board policies.

Interim Measures/Law Enforcement

Upon receipt of a complaint of hazing, the building principal or designee, in consultation with the Superintendent or designee, shall determine what, if any interim measures should be put in place to protect students from further hazing, bullying, discrimination or retaliatory conduct related to the alleged incident and report. Such interim measures may include, but not be limited to, the suspension of an adult who is involved, the separation of alleged victims and perpetrators, and the determination of what the complaining student needs or wants through questioning.

Those receiving the initial report and conducting or overseeing the investigation will assess whether the complaint, if proven, would constitute hazing, aggravated hazing or organizational hazing and shall report it to law enforcement consistent with district practice and, as appropriate, consult with legal counsel about whether to report the matter to law enforcement at every stage of the proceeding. The decision to report a matter to law enforcement should not involve an analysis by district personnel of whether safe harbor provisions might apply to the person being reported, but information on the facts can be shared with law enforcement in this regard.

Referral to Law Enforcement and School Safety and Security Incident Reporting –

For purposes of reporting hazing incidents to law enforcement in accordance with school safety and security reporting, the term **incident** shall mean an instance involving an act of violence; the possession of a weapon; the possession, use or sale of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia as defined in the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act; the possession, use or sale of alcohol or tobacco products; or conduct that constitutes an offense listed in the school safety and security provisions of School Code.

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report required incidents and may report discretionary incidents committed by students on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with law enforcement and Board policies.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all new incidents to the PA Department of Education on the required form.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all parties, witnesses, the allegations, the filing of a complaint and the investigation shall be handled in accordance with applicable law, regulations, this policy and the district's legal and investigative obligations.

Retaliation

Reprisal or retaliation relating to reports of hazing or participation in an investigation of allegations of hazing is prohibited and shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Consequences for Violations

Safe Harbor –

An individual needing medical attention or seeking medical attention for another shall not be subject to criminal prosecution if the individual complies with the requirements under law, subject to the limitations set forth in law.

Students –

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding of hazing, the investigator shall recommend appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct. The student may also be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removal from the activity or organization. The fact of whether a student qualified for and received safe harbor under a criminal investigation shall be considered in assigning discipline.

Non Student Violators/Organizational Hazing -

If the investigation results in a substantiated finding that a coach, sponsor or volunteer affiliated with the student activity or organization engaged in, condoned or ignored any violation of this policy, the coach, sponsor or volunteer shall be disciplined in accordance with Board policy and applicable laws and regulations. Discipline could include, but is not limited to, dismissal from the position as coach, sponsor or volunteer, and/or dismissal from district employment.[26]

If an organization is found to have engaged in organizational hazing, it shall be subject to the imposition of fines and other appropriate penalties. Penalties may include rescission of permission for that organization to operate on school property or to otherwise operate under the sanction or recognition of the district.

Criminal Prosecution –

Any person or organization that causes or participates in hazing may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

Policy 122- Extracurricular activities

Purpose

The Board recognizes the educational values inherent in student participation in extracurricular activities and supports the concept of student organizations for such purposes as building social relationships, developing interests in a specific area, and gaining an understanding of the elements and responsibilities of good citizenship.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, **extracurricular activities** shall be those programs that are sponsored or approved by the Board and are conducted wholly or partly outside the regular school day; are marked by student participation in the processes of initiation, planning, organizing, and execution; and are equally available to all students who voluntarily elect to participate.

For purposes of this policy, an **athletic activity** shall mean all of the following:

1. An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by or associated with the school, including cheerleading, club-sponsored sports activities and sports activities sponsored by school-affiliated organizations.
2. Noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by or associated with the school.
3. Practices, interschool practices and scrimmages for all athletic activities.

Authority

The Board shall make school facilities, supplies and equipment available and shall assign staff members for the support of extracurricular activities for students. Such availability and assignment shall be in accordance with the Equal Access Act.

The Board encourages secondary level students to pursue clubs and interests that may not be related directly to any of the curriculum programs offered in the district. In pursuit of such a goal and in compliance with law, the Board maintains a limited open forum in which secondary students may meet for voluntary student-initiated activities unrelated directly to the curriculum, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical or other content of the speech related to such activities.

Any extracurricular activity shall be considered under the sponsorship of this Board when it has been approved by the Superintendent upon recommendation of the building principal.

The Board shall maintain the program of extracurricular activities at no cost to participating students, except that:

1. The Board's responsibility for provision of supplies shall carry the same exemptions as listed in the Board's policy on regular school supplies.[8]
2. Students may assume all or part of the costs for travel and attendance at extracurricular events and trips.

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would otherwise violate the Code of Student Conduct if any of the following circumstances exist:[9]

1. The conduct occurs during the time the student is traveling to and from school or traveling to and from school-sponsored activities, whether or not via school district furnished transportation.
2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.
3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.
4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, for example, a transaction conducted outside of school pursuant to an agreement made in school, that would violate the Code of Student Conduct if conducted in school.
5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.
6. There is otherwise a nexus between the proximity or timing of the conduct in relation to the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.

Delegation of Responsibility

Each school year, prior to participation in an athletic activity, every student athlete and their parent/guardian shall sign and return the acknowledgement of receipt and review of the following:

1. Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury Information Sheet.
2. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement the extracurricular activities program. All student groups shall adhere to Board policy and administrative regulations.

Guidelines

Guidelines shall ensure that the program of extracurricular activities:

1. Assesses the needs and interests of and is responsive to district students.
2. Involves students in developing and planning extracurricular activities.
3. Ensures provision of competent guidance and supervision by staff.
4. Guards against exploitation of students.
5. Provides a variety of experiences and diversity of organizational models.
6. Provides for continuing evaluation of the program and its components.
7. Ensures that all extracurricular activities are open to all students and that all students are fully informed of the opportunities available to them.

Equal Access Act

The district shall provide secondary students the opportunity for non curriculum-related student groups to meet on the school premises during non instructional time for the purpose of conducting a meeting within the limited open forum on the basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. Such meetings must be voluntary, student-initiated, and not sponsored in any way by the school, its agents or employees.

Non Instructional time is the time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins, after actual classroom instruction ends, or during the lunch hour.

The meetings of student groups cannot materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities in the school.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish the length of sessions, number per week, and other limitations deemed reasonably necessary.

The district retains the authority to maintain order and discipline on school premises in order to protect the well-being of students and employees and to ensure that student attendance at such meetings is voluntary.

Extracurricular Participant Discipline Protocols

Any student who receives an ISS (In-School Suspension) may not participate in an extracurricular activity the day the student is served an ISS.

Any student who receives **more** than four (4) total days of ISS during a season or extracurricular activity period shall be suspended from the team/club/activity for twenty (20) calendar days or the remainder of the season, whichever comes first.

Any student who receives an OSS (Out-of-School Suspension) may not participate in an

extracurricular activity or be physically present on the school campus the day the student served an OSS

Any student who receives **more** than three (3) days of OSS during a season shall be suspended from the team/club/activity for twenty (20) calendar days or the remainder of the season, whichever comes first.

Any student who receives a combination of ISS and OSS totaling more than three (3) days during a season shall be suspended from the team/club/activity for twenty (20) calendar days or the remainder of the season, whichever comes first.

Disciplinary Infractions During Voluntary, Out-of-Season Activities

Students who participate in voluntary, out-of-season activities during time periods when the school district is not in session (traditionally mid-June through mid-August) and commit offenses that would warrant an ISS or an OSS, will be suspended from the voluntary out-of-season activity and will be suspended immediately from the start of the in-season activity for a duration equal to the length of the ISS/OSS that would have been applied to the student had school been in session. This total shall count towards the maximum number of ISS/OSS days that a student may accumulate before serving a twenty (20) calendar day suspension or being removed from the team/club/activity.

Nothing in this protocol shall prevent the coach and/or advisor from taking further disciplinary action in response to violation of team, activity and/or school rules. These actions may include additional loss of playing time, game suspensions and/or removal from the team, club or activity.