

Esko High School Athletics **Parent Handbook**



2026-2027

Supporting Student-Athletes Involved in

Esko High School Athletics:

A Guide to a Positive Experience!

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Esko Athletics Core Values:

Integrity * Whole Person * Sportsmanship * Work Ethic * Multi-Sport * Fun
EHS PARENT HANDBOOK

Parents and Guardians -

The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in supporting your child, and all those involved in athletic programs at Esko High School. All adults – coaches, officials, event staff, administrators, fans, and parents – have a shared responsibility to create a positive experience for our student-athletes.

Parenting a child in the world of youth sports today is a complex task. The intensity, time commitment, financial costs, and emotional investment for young athletes and their families are at all-time highs. Youth are involved in competitive teams and leagues run by adults as early as elementary school. Supplemental camps and clinics all but ensure that there is rarely an “off-season” as they get older. Within that context, making sure that our children have developmentally appropriate experiences as they progress through our high school programs is our utmost priority.

Chances are great that you have been very involved as a parent throughout your child’s athletic experience to date. A significant percentage of parents coach their own child’s teams. Others volunteer as team managers, coordinate fundraisers, or sit on booster clubs. Many parents played competitive sports themselves at some level. No matter your personal experiences, the transition from “youth” and “club” sports into the system of educational athletics in the school district can be challenging.

Realistically, you will have less control and influence. You will probably experience a shift in how you engage with your child’s experience. This does not have to be a bad thing! High school athletics are often the most rewarding, memorable stage of your child’s participation in sports. And, we need your parental partnership! Chances are, however, that parenting a student-athlete in high school athletics will be different from your past experiences in club or association sports. We aim to support you throughout the journey.

Please let the coaches coach. Assume positive intent, especially when their style or strategy may differ from your own. Coaches are educators, with a focus on developing the whole person. Note that openly sharing negative opinions of coaches – in front of your child, on social media, and in public settings - may directly affect your child’s ability to be coachable, and it takes away from the team and the experience.

Thoughtfully consider the following words of advice, that have roots in research, psychology, and years of educational experience. Don’t over-focus on the athletic success of your child – particularly when it comes to statistical accomplishments or rewards. Instead, **focus on their attitude, work ethic, and ability to be coachable and respectful. These are transferable life skills far more valuable than a goal scored or conference award won.** While accolades are exciting, they are temporary. Honor the entire season and experience, as opposed to simply the score and end result.

When sports are experienced at their most successful, students are challenged and supported; they are allowed to fail and recover; they have opportunities to deal with adversity and succeed with integrity. They are empowered to advocate for themselves; they develop as people and as athletes. We hope our student athletes at Esko High School have such an experience during their time wearing our blue and gold.

In this handbook, we aim to create a better understanding of the issues that surround a student’s participation in interscholastic athletics. We hope that you will find this information both informative and beneficial. Thank you, parents, for allowing our staff to coach and advise your child! **GO ESKO!**

Sincerely,

Chad Stoskopf, Athletic Director

CONTACT AND WEBSITE INFORMATION

ESKO ATHLETICS WEBPAGE

We have a dedicated website that is exclusive to Esko High School athletics. This site is managed by the athletic office, coaches, and sport representatives. Sport-specific pages include contact information, calendars, camp and clinic information, photos and more. [Please visit Esko Athletics by clicking here.](#)

ESKO ATHLETICS SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow Esko Athletics on [Twitter, Instagram, Facebook](#). Over 100 informational and celebratory tweets are sent annually about Esko sports.

TEAM SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION APPS

Each team will use their own communication tool. Apps like remind101 and groupme are free to use. Coaches will communicate their tool of choice and provide updates to players about schedules, bus times, events, & more.

Esko High School, 2 East Hwy 61, PO Box 10, Esko MN, 55733

Athletic Director, Chad Stoskopf, cstoskopf@esko.k12.mn.us 218-879-1909

Athletic Secretary, Tanya Pagelkopf, tpagelkopf@esko.k12.mn.us 218-879-4673 ext. 629

EVENT SCHEDULES - WWW.POLARLEAGUE.ORG

For Esko schedules; game times, locations, and bus times click [HERE](#). ** Please subscribe to the game/event calendar for the specific sport(s) and level(s) that your child plays by clicking on [‘Notify Me’](#)! This is the fastest/easiest way to stay connected and up to date about any changes.

ADMISSION FEES, PUNCH CARDS

Some EHS athletic events require tickets for admission. Tickets are \$6/adults and \$4/students. We offer discounted punch cards for admission to home athletic events. Adults can purchase the ten punch card for \$50 and Student cards are \$25. These can be purchased in both the district and athletic offices. Esko residents can pick up free senior passes (65+) with proof of residence in person at the high school office. Senior passes will not be available at contests and must be picked up during the school day.

EHS ATHLETICS PURPOSE, VALUES, & VISION

PURPOSE:

We provide diverse sports opportunities that develop CHARACTER and COMMUNITY.

VALUES:

Integrity – being accountable, honest, & doing the right thing when no one is looking

Whole Person – developing sport and life skills as an athlete, scholar, and person

Sportsmanship – demonstrating respect, teamwork, fairness, and responsibility

Work Ethic – having grit, and taking pride in the process of growth and improvement

Multi-Sport Athletes – participating in 2 or more sports, continuing through graduation

Fun – engaging in sports with spirit and enthusiasm

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:

- **Develop lifelong relationships and Esko values**
- **Grow towards performance objectives**
- **Contribute positively to the Esko community**

OUR PURPOSE

EHS features **education-based** sports programming. We are not club sports. We are not college or professional sports. What does this mean? It means that as scholastic, educational athletic programs we are purpose *and* goal oriented. Goals are the results or achievements toward which effort is directed or aimed– like winning a game. Purpose is the reason for which something exists or is done – like developing life skills. Goals have a beginning and an end. Purpose doesn't. Purpose is what we live for.

Our EHS coaches and programs aim to develop the whole child. Our shared **PURPOSE** is to develop values and life skills that are transferable to all aspects of students' lives now, and in the future. These include things like integrity, sportsmanship, work ethic, empathy, teamwork, and more. We also intend to compete. Our **GOALS** include competitive, statistical, and scoreboard related achievements.

It is crucial that as an EHS sports community, we acknowledge that we have both a purpose *and* goals. Coaches will share their transformational purpose statements as part of the vision for their sport. You are encouraged to have discussions with your child about their own purpose and goals as a student-athlete.



JOINING A TEAM

EHS offers 25 different varsity sports throughout the year. Many sports offer three or four levels of play, including JV/C-Squad/JH or 8th and 7th grade teams. Some offer 5 separate levels of play.

Students interested in joining a team should visit <https://esko-ar.schooltoday.com/>

Coaches will post information about registration, pre-season meetings, equipment needed, levels offered, and more. They will also identify a team communication app for their sport that athletes are encouraged to join. Fall sports begin in mid-August, winter sports start in November, and spring sports start in March. Check out the website about four (4) weeks prior to the start of your season to get all the information you need.

A complete staff directory of head coaches - including email and phone numbers - can be found [HERE](#).

Athletes must be registered and cleared by the EHS athletic office prior to starting practice. Registration is a fully online process. **You can find registration information, including participation fees, on the athletics website [HERE](#).** Note that athletes must have a current sports-qualifying physical on file with the athletic office before you can begin registration. New physicals can be emailed to tpagelkopf@esko.k12.mn.us or dropped off in the HS Athletic Office.

There is a financial participation fee required to be on a team. Participation fees range in cost depending on the sport and level. You can find the participation fees by sport and individual maximums on the athletics website. **Participation fees shall not be a barrier to participation.** If you have concerns or need financial assistance, please contact the athletic office at 218-879-1909 or cstoskopf@esko.k12.mn.us

Fall Sports

Cross Country - Boys
Cross Country - Girls
Football
*Soccer - Boys
Soccer - Girls
*Swim & Dive - Girls
*Tennis - Girls
Volleyball

Winter Sports

*Alpine Ski - Boys
*Alpine Ski - Girls
Basketball - Boys
Basketball - Girls
*Hockey - Boys
*Hockey - Girls
*Nordic Ski - Boys
*Nordic Ski - Girls
**Swim & Dive - Boys
*Wrestling - Boys & Girls

Spring Sports

Baseball
**Golf - Boys
**Golf - Girls
Softball
**Tennis - Boys
Track & Field - Boys
Track & Field - Girls

*Coop with Cloquet High School, contact Cloquet athletic director [Paul Riess](#) for details on registration and head coach contact information.

**Coop with Proctor High School, contact Proctor athletic director [Anthony Wood](#) for details on registration and head coach contact information.

ATHLETICS STAFF

There are many different adults at EHS who are invested in making the athletic experience the best it can be. Reach out to these leaders when you have a question or need support.

Chad Stoskopf, Athletic Director - 218-879-1909 or cstoskopf@esko.k12.mn.us

Mr. Stoskopf leads all athletic department programming, featuring 25 sports, 60 head and assistant coaches, with over 450 student-athletes. He is very involved at the state and local level. Mr. Stoskopf has served on the MSHSL Board of Directors and serves as the MSHSL Region 7A Executive Secretary. He oversees all activities in our Region and is the tournament manager for several postseason tournaments. Chad is a

former three-sport high school athlete, collegiate athlete (captain), and high school head and assistant coach. He has also coached for the University of MN-Duluth Bulldogs. Mr. Stoskopf has been named 7A Region Athletic Administrator of the Year and he loves to watch Esko student-athletes compete & grow!

Tanya Pagelkopf, Athletic Secretary - 218-879-4673 ext. 629 or tpagelkopf@esko.k12.mn.us

Mrs. Pagelkopf has over 5 years of experience as the EHS Athletic Secretary. She supports and manages all aspects of athletic department programming. She is your first point of contact with questions about registration, athletic physicals, and participation fees. She coordinates sales of passes and all bus transportation requests. Mrs. Pagelkopf also works alongside all of the event staff that support games and tournaments like ticket takers, score table workers and PA announcers. She is a former EHS athlete and parent of three students who were active in a variety of EHS athletics and activities. She basically knows everything there is to know about EHS athletics, and you can reach out to her with any questions anytime!

Tom Nooyen, Athletic Trainer - 218-590-1056 or Thomas.Nooyen@essentiahealth.org

EHS partners with Essentia to provide exclusive sports medicine and athletic training services. Tom Nooyen is our nationally certified and state registered athletic trainer. He is on the field or in the training room ready to ensure the safety and sport-readiness of our student-athletes.

Tom is typically in the training from 2:30-3:30pm, then at practices/games from 3:30-9:00 pm

Tom is often the first response after an athletic injury. He will provide evaluation and early triage to the appropriate medical provider, whether it's a visit to the emergency room, a physician, or a physical therapist. He is also trained in CPR and first-aid. His goal is to make participation and competition as safe as possible, and to minimize the risk of injury. Tom can help with injury prevention like taping and stretching and recovery therapies, injury evaluation and diagnosis, immediate and emergency care, rehabilitation and reconditioning, and IMPACT concussion testing for concussions. He is the medical link between your child, their coaches, you as parents, and other health care professionals. Tom is the most popular member of our coaching staff and is committed to working alongside EHS student-athletes to help them compete at their best!

MSHSL ELIGIBILITY & CODE OF CONDUCT

We are a proud member of the Minnesota State High School League and the Polar League Conference.

Participation in a MSHSL sport at EHS is a privilege. **Being on an EHS team means that athletes are committed to abiding by all MSHSL rules and regulations.** This include but are not limited to:

- ☐ I will respect the rights and beliefs of others and will treat others with courtesy and consideration.
- ☐ I will be responsible for my own actions and the consequences of my actions.
- ☐ I will respect the property of others.
- ☐ I will respect and obey the rules of my school and laws of my community, state and country.
- ☐ I will show respect to those that are responsible for enforcing the rules of my school and the laws of my community, state and country

Your sport-specific coach may have team standards and rules best fits their unique program philosophy, while supporting our EHS athletics purpose. These standards and rules will be clearly delineated, and may be more restrictive than those set by the MSHSL.

GET TO KNOW YOUR COACHES

EHS is proud to employ 25 head coaches that represent our varsity sports. We also employ over 70 additional paid and volunteer assistant coaches across all of our sports. **Our coaches have a great blend of experience, education, and professional training.** See below to learn more about our head coaches.

- ☐ 90% of our head coaches have at least 10 years of overall coaching experience.
- ☐ 80% of our head coaches have over seven years of head coaching experience at EHS in particular.
- ☐ The majority are professional educators:
 - ☐ 6 of them teach and 2 are paraprofessionals in ISD 99.
- ☐ Most of them have been honored at least once as a Section Coach of the Year
- ☐ 100% participated in two or more school-sponsored sports as a high school athlete themselves.
- ☐ Over half participated in a varsity sport in college. Of those that played a varsity sport in college, over half were recognized as All-Conference or All-American.
- ☐ Head coaches in particular are certified and meet MN state statute requirements to be a head coach.
- ☐ All coaches at all levels participate in annual continuing education from the MSHSL and EHS.

TEAM SELECTION, STYLE OF PLAY

In each program, coaches are hired by the school district to be responsible for that sport. Team selection, style of play, game strategy, playing time, and decisions regarding game situations are the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. This is a subjective and objective process that includes both quantitative (skills, agility, strength) and qualitative factors (maturity, coachability, work ethic). The head coach establishes the criteria for these decisions with input from their assistants. Coaches will share their team selection and style of play philosophy at pre-season meetings.

THE 70% RULE

Over 70% of children who participate in a sport in elementary school do NOT participate in that sport in high school. Participating in high school athletics is a privilege. It is an experience that a statistical few have the opportunity to enjoy. If you are reading this, your child is one of them!

Research about the reasons why kids play/stay in sports shows that winning never makes the top five. Concurrently, when researching why kids quit sports, *not* winning does not make the top three. Make no mistake, kids love to compete. But it's more about growth and camaraderie. Athletics are about way more than statistics and winning – just ask the kids!

THE 96% RULE

96% of student-athletes will not participate in organized, competitive athletics after high school. This means that your child has only a 4% chance of competing at *any* level of college athletics. Further, did you know that only 1% of high school athletes earn a scholarship of any amount, at the Division I or II level?

We are committed to supporting and developing the 4%. However, please note our broad and balanced commitment to the 96%. EHS athletics functions to support the holistic development of all student-athletes. It may be a byproduct, but it is not our mission, to promote individuals for the sole purpose of post-secondary recognition or opportunity..

NCAA scholarship probability data can be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

PARTICIPATION PYRAMID

Student-athletes in high school sports programs will likely experience a “participation pyramid” as they get older. This means that there are often fewer opportunities as students move from 7th grade to varsity teams. There is an increasingly competitive arc, as teams evolve from being more developmental to more competitive. C-Squad teams are typically filled with students from a single grade, while varsity teams roster students from multiple grades based on competitive criteria. Realistically, there will be fewer student-athletes in each grade competing from year to year as athletes progress from C to JV to Varsity teams. Please review the sport-specific expectations that coaches provide about their program, so you can be informed about the progression of each level for that sport.

ATHLETE ACCELERATION

ISD 99 implements an athletic department policy regarding the potential promotion of student-athletes in grades 7-8 on high school teams. For a promotion to be considered, coaches must receive approval from the athletic director, according to established departmental criteria. The intent and purpose behind this approach is to keep the pyramid of sports participation as wide as possible, for as long as possible, at the C and JV levels.

An exception to this policy is if we have limited participation numbers overall at a particular level, and need to move student-athletes “up” in order to fill a roster and fulfill our obligation to a conference schedule. A second exception would be for EHS programs that are offered for grades 7-12 all together. (e.g. Alpine Ski, Nordic Ski, Gymnastics).

HOW TO BE THE BEST SPORTS PARENT YOU CAN BE

Your child’s success or lack of success in sports – when measured by playing time, statistics, and awards - does not indicate what kind of parent you are. Having a child that is coachable, respectful, a great teammate, mentally tough, resilient, and tries their best *is* a reflection of your parenting. Research continues to show that (1) giving your child feedback has an impact (2) the kind of feedback you give matters tremendously! Sports psychologists inform us that parent feedback should first and most often be developmentally supportive. Specifically, the following statements are most impactful, especially when they are not attached at all to statistics like minutes played, goals scored, or accolade awarded:

- * I love to watch you play.*
- * I love to watch you grow.*
- * I am proud of you.*

Engaging with your child directly before or after a game can be a very challenging time for both the parent and athlete. Please take steps to ensure that the “ride home” or game-related conversation is a healthy one - where you demonstrate empathy and allow your son/daughter to steer the conversation – *if they want to discuss the event at all*. Please take three minutes to view and reflect on this “ride home” video lesson. How might this influence your post-game parenting? <http://truesportpur.ca/theridehome>

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR SPORTS PARENTS:

Changing the Game by John O’Sullivan (book, and website) <http://changingthegameproject.com/>

Why More is Less for WOSPs-How to be the best Sports Parent You Can Be – by Dr. John Tauer ([book - link](#))

A Parent’s Guide to Helping Athletes Have a Successful Sport Experience by Gregory Dale ([book - link](#))

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ON THE STUDY OF YOUTH SPORTS:

Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, Michigan State University (website)
<http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/isys/>

The Aspen Institute – Project Play (website)
<http://www.aspenideas.org/speaker/Tom-Farrey?gclid=CPncxqXlz80CFQIOaQodR8UGUw>

Is It Wise to Specialize? By John O’Sullivan ([book - link](#))

The Most Expensive Game in Town by Mark Hyman (book, website) <https://markhyman.com/>

Game On: The All-American Race to Make Champions of Our Children by Tom Farrey ([book-link](#))

SPORTSMANSHIP

Sportsmanship is one of our six core values. It is a big deal, and a huge commitment! At its best, athletic competition is a great value for the entire Esko community, and society as a whole. It is a symbol of a great ideal - pursuing victory with integrity. Everyone involved in athletic competition - especially the players, coaches, and parents - have a duty to treat the traditions of the sport and other participants with respect.

Disrespectful behavior towards opponents, officials, or anyone involved in your sport and events is not acceptable. Profanity, trash-talking, taunting and unseemly celebrations do not have a place at high school competitions and will not be tolerated at Esko High School events. We have high expectations. We know that sometimes our opponents or other schools may behave differently. We hold ourselves to a high standard and will set the bar high for behavior. Act with class at all times, all places and in all ways.

Did you know? Officials are required to be registered, certified, and complete annual continuing education requirements. They typically get paid between \$50-90 per game before taxes.

The MSHSL currently has a record low number of available and new officials. The #1 reason why, according to officials? Unruly and disrespectful fans. *Please act with class at EHS!*

We cannot have competitions without officials. Games are increasingly being canceled and moved to non-traditional nights. As a parent, please be a part of a solution and not the problem. Set a positive example for your child and others. Refrain from disrespectful criticism, yelling and negative behavior, and hold your fellow fans to the same high standard.

Officials are our neighbors and colleagues. They are doing their best, and they will make mistakes. **Be a fan your child can be proud of. *Please represent our community with respect!***

Yelling and trying to coerce officials, opponents, or spectators into changing their behavior creates a hostile, negative atmosphere. When was the last time an official changed a call because you yelled at them? Have you seen an opponent or fan change just because you are taunting or screaming it at them? Of course this sounds ridiculous! Yet, this kind of behavior does happen. And we need to be better.

Attending EHS athletic events is a privilege, and with that privilege comes responsibility.

Responsibility to practice exemplary sportsmanship. Our collective behaviors all reflect upon EHS and help to form our reputation in the community. Please consider what you are modeling, and what message you are sending with your actions and behavior. **Sportsmanship begins with you!**

GREAT SPORTSMANSHIP “101”

TOWARDS OPPONENTS

- Treat opponents the way you would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. We need opponents – we literally can't have a game or competition without them!
- Refrain from taunting or making any kind of derogatory remarks to opponents during the game, particularly any comments of ethnic, racial, or sexual nature. Refrain from intimidating behavior.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner that you would like to be greeted following either victory or defeat. Encourage injured players and recognize outstanding performances for both teams.

TOWARDS GAME RULES & OFFICIALS

- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete and the sport, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of you, your team, your school and our community.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with others. This will assist both them and you in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the game.

OF SPECTATORS IN GENERAL...

- Remember that you are at a contest to support your team and to enjoy the skill and competition; not to ridicule the other team and its fans. Avoid antics that draw attention to you instead of the game.
- Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students and that mistakes are made.
- Remember that a ticket to a school athletic event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others and be generally obnoxious.
- Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during games, and afterwards on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).
- Use only those cheers that support and uplift the teams involved. Be a positive behavior role model at events through your own actions and by censuring those around you whose behavior is unbecoming.

OF PARENTS IN PARTICULAR...

- Understand the purpose of educational athletics. School sports are about kids learning and having fun.
- Understand that you are possibly the biggest role model in your child's life. Wild behavior in the stands and challenging authority of coaches and officials does little to model positive behavior in your child's presence.
- Make your cheers during games those of support of your child – not instructions as to how to play.
- Recognize that school coaches, officials, and administrators are facilitating leadership of your child's athletic activities. Model respect for this authority – openly and behind the scenes.

TIPS ON BEING A GREAT SPORTS PARENT

LET YOUR STUDENT CREATE THEIR OWN MEMORIES

Separate your sports life from theirs. Let your student discover their own sports journey. Help to calm the stormy waters, but let them handle the navigational problems. They will learn to be their own person, which will most likely be different than you. This is developmentally appropriate!

TEACH RESPECT FOR OTHERS

There will be times when you disagree with a coach or official. Remember they are trained, trying their best, and intend to be fair. Show good sportsmanship by assuming positive intent, and treating the situation with respect. Cheer good plays by both teams. Mention good calls by the officials to others. Remember to have fun and enjoy the event!

LET THE COACH DO THE COACHING

When your student is competing, let the coach do the coaching. You can teach and model discipline, maturity, sportsmanship, and how to deal with success and failure. Develop your student-athlete's character, and teach life skills that athletics bring to the fore-front.

If you have questions about or problems with what the coach is doing, it is best to follow the conflict resolution process and seek a solution in person while following our established [chain of command](#). Complaining and jumping to conclusions without all the necessary information rarely leads to an agreeable and rewarding experience.

HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN THROUGH FAILURE

The way your student handles failure can help them to face the certain failures life will throw them in the future. The worst time for you as a parent to give advice is immediately after a disappointment. Let your student cope in their own way, then, at some later time they will be much more receptive to words of correction or advice from you.

The joy of sport is in the process, the fight, and the struggle. It is not a shiny trophy... That doesn't last. Parents: Don't fight against the struggle. ACCEPT the Struggle.

It is your child's struggle, not yours. Always remember this about sports. It is your CHILD'S:

- Experience
- Struggle
- Game
- Challenge
- Fight
- Courage
- Tenacity

Parents: SUPPORT, CHEER, and ENCOURAGE, but do not cross the line. The struggle is not the enemy. The struggle is HOW your child becomes resilient & strong. Adversity makes us better. Do not be a snowplow parent = clear a path in front of your child so that they never face adversity. What happens when they hit the real world?

PARENTS - Come to Grips. Do it FOR your child. The struggle NEVER ends Post EHS, the struggles get more serious:

- Jobs/Career
- Relationships
- Health Issues
- Finances
- Loss

Your child will be much better prepared for these struggles. You will look back... ..and know why.

GET TO KNOW THE COACH

Since the coach has a powerful influence on your student, take the time to attend parent meetings, and get to know the coach's philosophy, expectations, and knowledge.

FOCUS ON YOUR CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Focus on what your student does well, how they contribute positively, and where they need to improve. Don't focus on the progress or success of other athletes. Especially if you wish it were different, don't assume that your child does not enjoy their role on the team.

LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD...BUT STAY RATIONAL

Always listen to your child, but remember to stay rational until you dig deeper to better understand the situation. Students often exaggerate both their heroics and their woes. They are teenagers, and don't want to disappoint you. When appropriate, seek perspective from the coaches who are/were present.

BE MINDFUL OF YOUR ROLE AS A ROLE MODEL

Take a good, honest look at your actions and reactions in the athletic arena. These actions are a big cue to your student and to others around you. Would your child be proud of your actions? Your spouse? Your employer?

SHOW UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

The most important thing is to show your child and communicate to them that you love and support them - win or lose - and *no matter what role they had or how they performed.*



"Heads, I listen to instructions my coach shouts. And tails, I listen to instructions my dad shouts."

PARENT PLEDGE

Everyone involved in athletic competition has a duty to treat the traditions of the sport and other participants with respect. As adults, it is our responsibility to teach and model self-control.

We have high expectations. Two simple rules can help:

- (1) **KEEP IT POSITIVE!**
- (2) **DIRECT YOUR CHEERS TOWARD OUR TEAM!**

If you follow these two rules, the event can be energized in a supportive way! Disrespectful behavior, involving negative treatment of opponents and officials, profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting and unseemly celebrations do not have a place at high school competitions and will not be tolerated at EHS events. Spectators who yell, scream and coerce officials, players, coaches, and opponents only create a hostile, negative atmosphere. These are not supportive behaviors. They are disruptive, have no proof of having a positive impact, and often embarrass themselves and their child.

Refrain from coaching your child from the stands. They have already demonstrated the courage to compete. They will do their best, and they will make mistakes. They can only process a limited amount of real-time information in the middle of an event. They cannot focus, compete, and communicate with their teammates and coaches...and also try to listen to whatever you may try to yell at them.

Let go and let your child play.

Esko parents are expected to acknowledge our sportsmanship and supportive expectations by signing the **PARENT PLEDGE** as part of the registration process.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND COACHES

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to appreciate actions of the other and provide greater benefits to your child. As parents, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on them. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

Communication from your child's coach:

1. Transformational purpose statement, definition of success, and philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, including sportsmanship and MSHSL rules and policies
3. Location and times of all practices and games, and transportation expectations
4. Team requirements, i.e. practices, special equipment, out of season training, lettering policy, etc.
5. Procedures to follow – should your child be injured, attendance at school on practice/game days, etc
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation
7. Regular, individual meetings with players regarding role, how to improve, etc.
8. Consistent, timely, thorough communication throughout the season (email, website, etc.)

Communication that coaches expect from parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and or expectations
3. Notification of any illness or injury of missed practices

As your child becomes involved in the programs at EHS they may experience some of the most rewarding moments of their young lives. However, there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wished. In some circumstances, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coaches:

1. Treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope, or in a role you may not prefer. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you can see above, certain things can and should be discussed with the coach. Other things, such as items below, must be left to the professional judgment of the coach.

Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coach:

1. Team selection
2. Playing time
3. Team strategy
4. Play calling

5. Other student-athletes

There are certain situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parents. **The student athlete should be and is expected to be involved in these meetings.** To resolve any issue, we must have everyone's perspectives and involvement.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. However, it is requested that you follow professional dialogue expectations. It is very important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When a conference is necessary, the following steps are expected to be followed in order to promote resolution.

If there is a problem:

STEP 1: Have your son/daughter talk directly to the coach, one on one – this is part of the learning and maturing process. * If involving a very young athlete, i.e. a 7th grader on a high school team, a developmentally appropriate exception can be made. In these select cases, a parent can begin on step 2.

If the problem is not resolved:

STEP 2: Contact the coach via email for their insight into the problem. Parents are welcome to provide support for the student-athlete through conversations with the coach after the initial player/coach discussion.

STEP 3: Set-up a face-to-face meeting with the coach **and your son/daughter**. The call should be directed to the coaches' school phone number/email. Inquiries will be returned by coaches in a timely fashion, typically between 24-48 hours.

Parents Should Not:

1. Call the Athletic Director or EHS administration without participating in the first 3 steps.
2. Confront the coach before or after practice - in person, via phone, or electronically.
3. Confront the coach before or after a game - in person, via phone, or electronically.
4. Confront the coach before or after the banquet - in person, via phone, or electronically.

These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. ** Please allow for a 24-hour reflection (cooling) period, and follow the [process](#).

Coaches are professionals. A parent would not walk into a classroom during class time and confront the teacher about a poor grade. They would not walk into a doctor's office without an appointment to confront them about a diagnosis. **Please do not confront a coach in a public setting.** There are respectful, professional, proper ways to communicate and have your concerns addressed. Practices and games are highly emotional times for everyone involved; players, coaches, and parents. Confrontations around these times take everyone out of their game. Just like the athlete who prepares mentally and physically for a practice or game, coaches are also thoughtful in their daily preparation. During a

practice or game, coaches need to be able to focus 100% of their energy on the athletes as individuals and as a team.

If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution:

STEP 4: Contact the Athletic Director and request a meeting with all parties. If steps 1-3 have been followed appropriately, the AD will mediate a resolution between the student-athlete, coach, and parent.

We appreciate your respect for this professional, respectful chain of communication!

Focused dialogue is a crucial part of conflict resolution. Your willingness to follow the expectations is paramount to successfully resolving potential issues and ensuring positive outcomes.

ESKO ATHLETICS REGISTRATION – “rSchool” DIRECTIONS

All EHS athletic registration takes place online. There is no in-person or paper registration. With the exception of the Sports Qualifying Physical Examination Form, all forms and fees must be submitted electronically. Fees are due by the second Monday of each season. ISD 99 uses “rSchool” for athletic registrations. The first time you attempt to register, you will be required to create an account. Make sure you save your username and password for future registrations because creating a duplicate account will invalidate your child's registration.

EXPIRED PHYSICALS

- If your physical is expired, you must [email](#) or turn in a **copy** of a new, updated sports qualifying physical to the Athletic Office.
- Physicals should also be sent to the host AD for cooperative sports involving Cloquet and Proctor.

PLEASE NOTE - Once the online registration is complete, the student will still need to be cleared by the Athletic Office. **If a student is not cleared you will be notified as to what is needed to have your son/daughter cleared to participate.** Call the Athletic Office with questions at 218-879-4673 ext. 629.

Student-athletes who register for EHS programs must abide by regulations set forth by the MSHSL, Polar League, and ISD 99/Esko High School. In order to be fully eligible for athletic participation, students must meet the specific requirements detailed in the registration process that include (1) behavior code of conduct (2) academic and chemical eligibility (3) school attendance (4) athletic fees (5) athletic trainer authorization (6) insurance (8) other MSHSL guidelines. Student-athletes and parents/guardians will be provided with these expectations and rules during the online registration process.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Esko High School and the MSHSL have an academic eligibility requirement. Student-athletes will be certified as eligible to represent Esko High School (EHS) in Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) activities according to bylaw 108.00 of the MSHSL Official Handbook that requires adequate progress towards graduation. Student eligibility status will fall into one of these categories:

- **Eligible:** Eligible for participation in all athletics without restriction.
- **Ineligible:** May not participate in athletic contests.

General Statement of Policy

EHS student-athlete eligibility status will be determined based on each athlete's ability to pass all quarter and semester courses. Students who fail a quarter course will be ineligible for $\frac{1}{8}$ of their MSHSL regular season competitions. Students who fail a semester course will be ineligible for $\frac{1}{4}$ of their MSHSL regular season competitions. EHS Principal Hexum reserves the right to make adjustments to this policy on a case by case basis.

The student will remain on the athletic roster, and remain eligible to attend practices and other team functions until their suspension has been completed or their final grades have improved.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

In order to fully participate in athletic practice or competition, student-athletes must:

- (1) be present for at least 50% of the school day (3.5 class periods) in order to be eligible to participate on that particular day
- (2) have no unexcused absences during a school day to be eligible on that given day
- (3) be present in school on time for the first hour the day following a game or competition, in order to be eligible for the practice/game on that given day (or have written medical appointment verification, or administrative permission).

PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE EHS ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

When students are involved in multiple school-sponsored activities at EHS, conflicts will arise where practices and/or competitions may be missed. Missing a practice or competition may directly affect the student's participation in those activities. Students are expected to adhere to the following:

1. The student should coordinate their schedules between activities, and note the conflicts that might exist before becoming involved or trying out in those activities.
2. If a conflict exists, the student should contact the coaches and advisors involved proactively, in advance of the conflicts(s), to discuss the conflicts and possible resolutions.
3. As a general rule, participation in a performance is accepted as priority over a practice (i.e. a band concert before a soccer practice, or a basketball game over a choir practice), and a varsity-level event is accepted as priority over a non-varsity event.
4. If a conflict still exists, the advisors and coaches involved shall meet in person to resolve any potential conflicts, and then coordinate a joint communication to the student.
5. If a conflict still remains, the Athletic Director and/or Principal may intervene with the coaches and/or advisors involved to resolve the conflict.

LEADERSHIP & CHEMICAL/CONDUCT ELIGIBILITY

Esko High School values student leadership, and is focused on the development of character, integrity, respect, and citizenship. Students will be recognized as leaders in our school community for outstanding effort, exemplary attitude, and positive contributions and achievements in these areas.

As part of this philosophy, **students who have a chemical or conduct violation as defined by the MSHSL will not be allowed to serve as a leader for one calendar year from the effective date of violation.** Specifically, students will not be allowed to serve as a sport captain, an officer in music, clubs, NHS, and Student Council, stand up as part of the Homecoming/Snoball and all other elected or appointed positions of leadership. All Esko Head Coaches and Advisors support and implement this policy, as part of our school-wide mission to develop leaders and recognize positive contributors to the Esko community.

Further, students who have a chemical violation are subject to MSHSL/EHS consequences. Students will be ineligible for the following amount of contests/events:

- 1st violation = 2 weeks or 2 events, whichever is greater
- 2nd violation = 3 weeks or 6 events, whichever is greater
- 3rd violation = 4 weeks or 12 events, whichever is greater.

Student-athletes will meet with the Athletic Director to determine the contests/events to be served for the violation within that particular student's sport or sports. Contests/events would carry over. For example, if a winter athlete has a violation in February, but only 1 contest/event is left, that athlete would serve the remaining contest/event of the consequence in their next sport season. A letter from the AD will be sent to the student, parents, and coaches detailing eligibility.

STUDENT TRAVEL, RELEASE TO PARENT PROTOCOL

The travel release policy adopted by the ISD 99 School Board can be found [here](#).

TEMPORARY RIDE AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

When District transportation **IS** provided, a student participating in an activity must travel to and from events via District transportation. Exceptions to this practice may be extended as noted below.

1. The parent/guardian must submit requests at least 24-hours in advance, via a written note or email sent **directly to the coach**. Requests must identify the full name of the adult driver authorized by the temporary notice. The coach must confirm receipt prior to the team departing for the event.
2. The student will be released to the temporarily authorized adult driver by the coach/advisor when: (a) the authorized adult driver makes face-to-face contact with the coach/advisor and

student following the event (b) the temporarily authorized adult driver signs the check-out list provided by the coach.

Students will not be left unsupervised at the site if the driver is not present at the time of departure from the event. If the temporarily authorized adult driver has not arrived by the time the team/group is ready to depart, the student will need to return from the event with the rest of the group on District transportation.

UNIFORM/EQUIPMENT REQUEST

The EHS athletic department supports the temporary, off-season use of uniforms and equipment for student-athlete use. Varsity game uniforms may be checked out to be used for senior pictures.

“Uniforms” may include home and away jerseys, shorts or pants, and helmets. There is no cost to check out uniforms. At times, some students may be required to have specific equipment in order to participate in a summer event (i.e., a helmet that is required at a football camp). These items may be rented from the athletic department at a rate of \$1/day per item.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD! Requests for uniforms and/or equipment should be emailed to [the head coach](#) two weeks in advance and include all of the following: (a) specify items like the exact sport, jersey number, and if home and away set(s) are desired (b) note if there are shorts, pants, or other items in addition to the jersey that is needed. Equipment and uniforms are expected to be returned within one week of their final use by the student-athlete. Athletes who do not return checked out items will be placed on the EHS fees/fines list.

BOOSTER CLUBS

A “booster club” is defined as an organization that is formed to help support the efforts of a sports team, academic club, or social activity in a collective manner. Support is shown in many ways, including volunteering time, talents, or treasures to better enhance the team or organization's performance.

Booster clubs are separate from the school district. They are different entities, with different laws and rules. However, a mutual understanding of the laws and rules that impact both school procedures and booster procedures is necessary. Booster representatives and EHS coaches shall maintain open dialogue, and follow all relevant and required procedures, as dictated by the school district and the 501(c) legal parameters to maintain joint compliance.

SOCIAL MEDIA

EHS and ISD 99 do not currently have a formal social media policy for student-athletes. That said, it is critical that students are thoughtful and respectful about what, and where, they post material. EHS recognizes and supports the student-athletes’ rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, however, each student-athlete must remember that playing and competing for the Esko High school is a privilege. Student-athletes represent the school district and they are encouraged to portray themselves, their teams, their school and the school district in a positive manner at all times. Social media comments and posts are an extension of their in-person behavior, and they will be held to high standards in alignment with the MSHSL code of conduct.

Do not have a false sense of security about student rights to freedom of speech – it is not unlimited. Online social networks are not a place where student-athletes can say and do whatever they want without repercussions. The information posted on a social networking site is considered public and permanent information. Think about who athletes represent: themselves, their family, their teammates and coaches, and their school. Athletes should protect themselves by maintaining a self-image of which they can be proud for years to come. Their athletic eligibility, and more importantly their character and reputation, depend on it!

All Esko Student athletes will complete digital citizenship coursework prescribed by the athletic department annually. These training sessions include an overview of digital citizenship, online safety and security, cyberbullying, and managing your digital reputation.

THANK YOU

Thank you for making the time to read and engage with this handbook. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming EHS athletics event. Take care and GO ESKO!