

TO BE RETAINED BY
STUDENT/ATHLETE



Dear Parent/Guardian and Student Athlete:

Welcome to the Interscholastic Athletic Program offered in the Bethlehem Area School District. This letter includes various information and policies associated with your child's participation in the Bethlehem Area School District's athletic program. It is very important information, **PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY AND SAVE FOR LATER REFERENCE.**

BE SURE THAT YOU AND YOUR CHILD READ THIS LETTER, SIGN THE ATTACHED FORM, AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH HIS/HER PHYSICAL PAPERS PRIOR TO THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SPORT IN WHICH THEY WISH TO PARTICIPATE.

BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S ATHLETIC POLICY

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of interscholastic athletics in the Bethlehem Area School District is to provide a wide variety of competitive athletic experiences to student athletes in a way that complements the academic experience of both the participant and the student body in general, and that instills, develops, and encourages the positive characteristics of excellence, sportsmanship, fitness, teamwork and discipline.

II. INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

The athletic program is an important and integral part of the total school program and is open to participation by all students regardless of individual differences. Through voluntary participation, the athlete gives time, energy, and loyalty to the program. He/she also accepts the training rules, regulations, and responsibilities which are unique to an athletic program. In order to contribute to the welfare of the group, the athlete must willingly assume these obligations even to the extent that he/she may be required to make sacrifices not required of others.

Goals of the Department of Athletics—

1. To provide a wide variety of competitive athletic experiences in programs that encourage broad participation by girls and boys.
2. To achieve, particularly in varsity sports, excellence in competition, sportsmanship, teamwork, and discipline.
3. To develop middle school, freshmen, and junior varsity programs that emphasizes participation and development of skills.
4. To have the interscholastic athletic experience complement and enhance the academic experience of student athletes who choose to participate.
5. To have the interscholastic athletic experience enhance the academic experience and quality of life of the entire student body of the Bethlehem Area School District by providing and promoting varied opportunities for spectators to attend athletic competitions.
6. To enhance the skills of the most gifted student athletes and assist those athletes who choose to make participation in collegiate athletics part of the college application process.
7. To instill qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, and discipline among the student athletes.
8. To hire and retain coaches who accept and adopt the mission and purpose of interscholastic athletics in the Bethlehem Area School District.
9. To effectively communicate the mission statement and goals of the Bethlehem Area School District to the student athletes, parents, and coaches.

In addition to the mission statement, goals, and academic guidelines of the Bethlehem Area School District athletic departments, participants in the interscholastic athletic program are also governed by the following Athletic Policy. It should be clearly understood that the same standard of behavior and discipline for the non student-athlete shall also apply to the student-athlete and any violation of the Code of Conduct may result in forfeiture of participating on a Bethlehem Area School District team.

III. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- a. Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (P.I.A.A.) rules will be followed in all cases of eligibility, transfer, physical examinations, insurance coverage, starting dates, use of school equipment, etc. Each coach has the responsibility to know these rules, to inform team members, and parents, and to enforce these regulations.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

A student athlete must be passing at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent as of each Friday during the grading period. If you fail to meet this requirement, you will lose your eligibility from the following Sunday through the Saturday immediately following the next Friday as of which you meet this requirement. Additionally, a student athlete may not be failing more than one course during a grading period.

- b. Any conviction resulting from a civil law infraction or other conduct by a student athlete occurring during that season that is determined by the head coach and school administration to be detrimental to the athletic program, school, or school district, will result in counseling by the head coach and a school administrator with possible suspension from team.
- c. No athlete may quit one sport and report for another after a season has begun without the mutual consent of both coaches and the administration. ("Season" is defined as that time from the first formal practice to the last contest, including tournaments.)
- d. Athletes must travel to and from contests, away from the Bethlehem Area School District in transportation provided by the district. The only exceptions are:
 1. Injury to a participant which would require alternate transportation.
 2. Prior arrangements made in writing between the participant's parent/guardian and the coach for the student to ride with the parent/guardian.
 3. When school transportation is not provided and alternate means are approved by the district.

- e. A display of unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opponent or official or use of profanity during a practice or contest will result in counseling by the head coach and possible suspension from team.
- f. Athletes are expected to attend all practice sessions and contests. Unexcused absence from scheduled practice/contest will result in:
 - 1. Counseling by the head coach and notification of parents by the coach, if necessary.
 - 2. Subsequent violations may result in suspension from the team and possible dismissal for the remainder of the season.
- g. Any violation of the Bethlehem Area School District Code of Conduct and/or academic procedures which require administrative action will be handled in accordance with the provisions of such guidelines. *(For example: If a violation involves a three-day suspension, the athlete will be suspended from contests of that team for those three days.)*
- h. Completion of the sports season, including all post-season playoffs, tournaments, and exhibitions is required in order for the student athlete to be eligible for letter or other team or individual awards. *(Exception: injury which limits participation.)* No awards shall be given to any student suspended for the remainder of the season as a result of disciplinary action. Final decisions regarding exceptions will be made by the Athletic Director.

IV. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

A student must be in school by 10:00 a.m. in order to participate in an athletic contest/practice that day. An exception will be made if the student has a medical or other approved appointment, in which case the student must present to the principal a signed statement from the doctor, or other authority, regarding the absence. A note from the parent/guardian for illness may also be accepted by the principal. The principal and/or athletic director will have final decision on these matters.

V. INSURANCE/INJURIES

Participants in all high school and middle school interscholastic sports programs are covered by an accident insurance program approved by the Board of School Directors. This coverage **IS NOT** intended to replace the major medical coverage provided by parents/guardians through group insurance plans.

Under the Bethlehem Area School District's Athletic Insurance program, the first One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) of expenses for injuries will be paid regardless of other insurance. At this point, the participant's own coverage will take over, according to the approved schedule of payments as outlined by the School District's Insurance Company.

Benefits under the Bethlehem Area School District's Interscholastic Sports Plan are in most instances the *Usual and Reasonable Fee* for necessary treatment, up to the policy's limits.

Claim forms will be issued by the Athletic Department. All injuries should be reported immediately to the coach and trainer on the high school level, and coach and nurse on the middle school level.

It is most important for the parents to complete the claim forms as soon as they are received and return them to the Athletic Office, or Middle School main office, immediately, **EVEN THOUGH** you may not have any medical bills at that time. **All injuries** must be reported to the Insurance Company within ninety (90) days of the accident.

A student who has been injured, and has had medical treatment, may not participate until the team doctor or trainer grants permission.

Any specific injury claim should be directed to the respective school.

VI. PARENT AND COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Parent-coach relationship: Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. Parents whose children are involved in our athletic program, have the right to understand what expectations are placed on their child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of the child's program.

- a. **Appropriate concerns to discuss with parents**
 1. The treatment of their child, mentally and physically
 2. Ways to help their child improve
 3. Concerns about their child's behavior

It is very difficult for parents to accept their child not playing as much as they may hope. You must make judgment decisions based on what you believe to be the best for all students involved. Coaches must be professional in dealing with parents in all matters involving their children.

- b. **Issues not appropriate to discuss with parents**
 1. Playing time
 2. Team strategy
 3. Play calling
 4. Other student athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, please call to set up an appointment.

Liberty High School	-- 610-691-7200 x 50951
Freedom High School	-- 610-867-5843 x 53951
Broughal Middle School	-- 610-866-5041
East Hills Middle School	-- 610-867-0541
Nitschmann Middle School	-- 610-866-5781
Northeast Middle School	-- 610-868-8581

VII. *Substance Abuse policy*

Procedures for Violations by Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities and Athletics

For the purpose of the application of these guidelines, students participating in athletics, extra and co-curricular activities for any public forum, including but not limited to performances, service activities, and events shall be considered.

Board Approved 5-21-07

Bethlehem Area School District

Policy Violation Guidelines for Students Participating in School Sponsored Activities and Athletics

Student extra and co-curricular activities and athletic activities are an extension of the educational experience that the district chooses to offer to all students. Therefore, student participation is voluntary and is a privilege, not a right. Those students who choose or who are chosen to participate in activities must be aware of the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct* for the Bethlehem Area School District. Each participant is expected to operate within the framework of these rules and regulations. For the purpose of the application of these guidelines, students participating in extra and co-curricular activities for any public forum, including but not limited to performances, service activities, and events shall be considered.

This document is designed to further amplify and clarify expectations as outlined in the board policies and within the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct* regarding policy violations for students involved in school sponsored activities and athletic teams.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply:

- (a) **Activity/Athletic Expulsion** – loss of participation privileges in the district's activity and/or athletic program.
- (b) **Activity/Athletic Suspension** – exclusion for a given duration from practices, competitions, events, and any other functions (trips, banquets, etc.) related to the activity. A suspension shall not necessarily be limited to the season during which the infraction occurred, but may be imposed during subsequent seasons. Where applicable, the suspended student's name may be removed from activity records, from award consideration, and from similar recognitions.
- (c) **Extra-curricular Season** – the specified duration of time the activity/club is scheduled to meet. Year-long activities will be considered on a semester-by-semester basis.
- (d) **Hazing** – any activity that recklessly, intentionally or unintentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in, or affiliation with any organization including but not limited to a sport or extra-curricular activity recognized by the Board of School Directors.

Endangering the physical health includes but is not limited to any contact of a physical nature such as whipping; beating; branding; forced calisthenics; exposure to the elements; forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage, drug, or controlled substance, or other forced activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

Endangering the mental health includes but is not limited to any activity that would subject an individual to unusual mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, prolonged exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which might result in extreme embarrassment, or any activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual. Any activity, if made part of an initiation, shall be presumed to be hazing, even if the participant willingly participates.

- (e) **Probation** – imposed for school related offenses that result in students being ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities until such probation is formally lifted by the board or administration.
- (f) **Review Committee** – body to conduct informal hearings, comprised of two building administrators, the assistant superintendent, and the athletic director/activity advisor.
- (g) **Sport Season** – the interval commencing with the approved PIAA starting date of practice or the first day of practice, whichever is later, and terminating with the final competitive event for the sport.
- (h) **Substantiated** – found to have committed a stated offense based on an investigation of the event and evidence gathered.
- (i) **Uniform** – articles of clothing, or equipment in possession bearing the school or school district name, symbols, or markings making it possible to distinguish a person's affiliation to the school or school district.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The actions and consequences noted below are to be read in addition to and in conjunction with the applicable board policies and the *BASD K-12 Student Code of Conduct*. The actions listed below represent serious violations and may result in the consequences as listed with each action in addition to penalties imposed through the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct*.

1. *Possessing, using, delivering, or selling alcohol or any controlled substance as defined by the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act while on school property, or at a school sponsored activity, or while on the way to or from a school sponsored activity, or in uniform regardless of location. The term possession includes but is not limited to having previously ingested alcohol, a controlled substance, or drug while on the way to school or to school sponsored activities.*

Consequence:

- a) *As defined in K-12 Student Code of Conduct*

- b) Immediate suspension from the activity for the duration of the season. Should the violation occur within forty-five (45) calendar days of the end of the season, the suspension will carry into the subsequent season for a minimum of forty-five (45) days. Violators will be referred to the school's Student Assistance Team (SAT) for possible assessment recommendation. Student may not participate in any activity as defined under these guidelines until the assessment has been completed and until any assessment recommendations have been followed, if applicable.
- c) The student must request a reinstatement review with the building principal to have the suspension(s) from activities lifted. Should reinstatement take place, the student may not assume any leadership role within the organization such as squad captain, section leader, officer position, and the like.

2. Action as stated in #1 above occurring off site and not at, or on the way to or from any school sponsored activity during the athletic or activity season.

Consequence:

- a) Immediate suspension from any activity for the duration of the season. Should the violation occur within forty-five (45) calendar days of the end of the season, the suspension will carry into the subsequent season for a minimum of forty-five (45) days as defined under these guidelines and referral to the school's SAT. Should the offense occur when the SAT is not functioning, the principal and/or athletic director or activity advisor will make a referral to a licensed provider appropriate to the offense for an assessment recommendation. Failure to complete an assessment will result in continued suspension from any activity as defined under these guidelines until the assessment and compliance with recommendation is conducted.
- b) Second offense results in permanent suspension from any activity as defined under these guidelines.
- c) The student must request a reinstatement review with the building principal to have the suspension(s) from activities lifted. Should reinstatement take place, the student may not assume a leadership role within the organization such as squad captain, section leader, officer position, and the like.

3. Action as stated in #1 above occurring off site and not at, on the way to or from a school sponsored activity during "out of season."

Consequence:

- a) Suspension from any activity as defined under these guidelines for a minimum of fifteen (15) calendar days beginning at the start of the activity season.
- b) Second offense results in suspension from any activity as defined under these guidelines.
- c) The student must request a reinstatement review with the building principal to have the suspension(s) from activities lifted. Should reinstatement take place, the student may not assume a leadership role within the organization such as squad captain, section leader, officer position, and the like.

4. *Possessing or using tobacco in any form while on school or while attending, or participating in a school-sponsored activity.*

Consequence:

- a) As defined in the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct* and other penalties as allowed by district policy.
- b) First offense results in activity suspension for a period of not less than five (5) calendar days.
- c) Second offense results in activity suspension from any activities as defined under these guidelines for ten (10) calendar days.
- d) A subsequent offense will result in additional suspensions or expulsion from the activity for the remainder of the season.

5. *Intentional damage (vandalism) or theft of school or person's property from any location on school property or off school property during any school sponsored event or related to any school sponsored activity.*

Consequence:

- a) As defined in *K-12 Student Code of Conduct*, see district discipline for possible penalties including administrative probation, suspension, or expulsion depending on the severity of the offense and other penalties, including referral to law enforcement authorities as allowed by district policy.
- b) Immediate activity suspension from any activities as defined under these guidelines for up to seven (7) calendar days, depending on severity of the incident, payment of restitution, or return of property.

6. *Failure to return activity equipment.*

Consequence:

- a) Suspension from any activity program participation as defined under these guidelines until equipment is returned or paid for.

7. *Acts that constitute a violation of the applicable criminal code(s) whether or not delineated as part of the K-12 Student Code of Conduct.*

Consequence:

- a) As defined in *K-12 Student Code of Conduct* as applicable.
 - b) Immediate activity suspension from the activity for a minimum of forty-five (45) calendar days, or the remainder of the season, or the school year depending upon the severity of the offense.
 - c) The student must request a reinstatement review with the building principal to have the suspension(s) from activities lifted.
8. *Failure to carry out the directions or rules and regulations established by the activity advisor. (Such rules and regulations must be distributed in writing to all students and be approved by the principal and activity director.)*

Consequence:

- a) As established by each activity advisor.

9. *Any improper conduct, which either violates district policy or constitutes behavior inappropriate for a district student representative.*

Consequence:

- a) As established by each activity advisor, may include suspension from the activity or expulsion depending on the nature of the violation.
- b) As defined in the applicable section of the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct*.

Procedural Guidelines for Student Activities and Athletic Program
Policy Violations

- (1) If an infraction is reported, the activity advisor shall notify the principal of the alleged conduct or violations. Either the administrator or the advisor, at the direction of the administrator, shall investigate to determine if a violation of the code has occurred.
- (2) If, after investigation, a violation of the code can be substantiated, the advisor, after consultation with the principal and district athletic administrator if applicable, shall impose the appropriate consequence by giving written notice to the student, the student's parents or guardian, the activity advisor if applicable, and the principal. Imposition of disciplinary consequences by the activity advisor

is in addition to any disciplinary penalty imposed by the principal pursuant to district policy.

- (3) The student or parent/guardian may appeal the advisor's decision to the principal who will convene a Review Committee to hear the appeal and render a decision. Such decision will be made within ten (10) business days of the appeal. During the ten (10) business days, the initial disciplinary action imposed will remain in effect. Appeal of the discipline penalties imposed by the principal under district policy is governed by the school code.
- (4) If the parent or student is not satisfied with the decision of the Review Committee, a second appeal meeting may be requested within five (5) business days of the decision. The appeal shall be in writing and directed to the Superintendent of Schools or designee. The superintendent or designee has complete discretion whether or not to hear the appeal. If the superintendent or designee decides to hear the appeal, such meeting shall be conducted within ten (10) business days of the date of the appeal. If such meeting is granted, the initial disciplinary action will remain in effect. The appeal meeting shall be informal and the decision of the superintendent or his/her designee shall be final.
- (5) Once a suspension or activity expulsion has been imposed, the student will not be permitted to participate in any activity unless the recommendation for suspension/expulsion is reversed after appeal.
- (6) An expulsion includes forfeiture of any school related awards for that season.
- (7) Nothing in the code shall preclude any building principal or assistant principal from suspending or excluding a student from an activity for any violation of the disciplinary rules of the Bethlehem Area School District even if the offense committed by the student would also be an offense under the terms of the *K-12 Student Code of Conduct*.
- (8) These penalties for policy infractions and discipline imposed there under are not limited to the season in which the infraction occurred.

A coach may set additional reasonable, discipline and attendance requirements at the beginning of the season.

PARTICIPATION IN ALL SPORTS REQUIRES AN ACCEPTANCE OF RISK OF POSSIBLE INJURY. YOUR CHILD, AS A PLAYER, CAN HELP MAKE THE GAME SAFER BY NOT INTENTIONALLY USING TECHNIQUES WHICH ARE ILLEGAL AND WHICH CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Athletic Office if we can help you or your child in any way during his/her athletic career with the Bethlehem Area School District.

Thank you for your kind cooperation in this very important matter.

Freedom High School Athletic Office: 610-867-5843 x53951

Liberty High School Athletic Office: 610-691-7200 x50951

Sincerely,

Bethlehem Area School District
Department of Athletics

(PLEASE SIGN BASD POLICY LETTER-ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
LOCATED ON THE FRONT OF THIS PACKET AND RETURN WITH PHYSICAL
PAPERS

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