

WEST SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOLS

STUDENT ATHLETE HANDBOOK



POLICIES AND FORMS

www.wscschools.org
(click on athletics)

677-3141

This handbook is to provide for student athletes and their parent/guardians, a guide to the interscholastic athletic programs in the West Seneca School District (WSCSD). In addition to the information presented in this handbook, specific policies for that sport season will be presented by the coach. All student athletes are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations established by the Commissioner of Education, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and the West Seneca Schools Board of Education.

It should be understood by all student athletes and their parent/guardians that it is a privilege to participate on an interscholastic team. With this privilege comes the responsibility of making a commitment to all rules and regulations.

Philosophy

The West Seneca Central School District interscholastic athletic program is built upon the positive qualities of pride, commitment and performance with an emphasis on academics, sportsmanship, safety and chemical free participation. The expectation is for excellence both on and off the playing areas. The district has a high rate of participation in a well-rounded program of team and individual sports. West Seneca offers a variety of sports at the Varsity, JV and Modified levels. Our teams and students participate in the Erie County Interscholastic Conference, Section VI and New York State competitions. Many teams have also been recognized for their team grade point average in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Team Scholar-Athlete program.

The philosophy of athletics, in the WSCSD, considers athletics to be an integral part of the school's educational program. We believe that athletics provide experiences that will affect the student athlete physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. We believe that by promoting sportsmanship, at all levels, the athletic program instills pride, reinforces a sound value system, and enhances the individual's self-image, as well as the image of the school district and the community.

July 2015

The WSCSD's athletic program should achieve and maintain the following objectives:

- ✓ Concentrate on the development of skill and on student participation in contests.
- ✓ Develop athletes who have high moral and ethical values, standards and behavior.
- ✓ Develop athletes who demonstrate good sportsmanship. We believe that the basic rules of good sportsmanship consists of: showing respect for opponents at all times; show respect for officials and their decisions; know, understand, and follow the rules of the contest; maintain self-control at all times; recognize and appreciate skill in opponent's performance.
- ✓ Develop a competitive winning attitude.
- ✓ Encourage individual commitment to personal and team goals.
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of academic achievement. (see Academic Policy - Appendix C)
- ✓ Encourage students to participate in a variety of sports at their own level of ability.
- ✓ Encourage parent and community participation in the total sports program

Eligibility

1. A student participating in the interscholastic athletic program must be a bonafide student as defined in the NYSPHSAA handbook and:
 - a. registers for school during the first 15 days of the semester;
 - b. enrolls in and takes at least 4 subjects, including physical education;
 - c. is in regular attendance at least 90% of the school calendar year. Bonafide absences caused by personal illness are expected.
2. Students are eligible for interschool competition in grades 9-12 until their nineteenth birthday. If they reach the age of 19 after July 1, the student may continue to participate for the remainder of the school year.
3. All student athletes must have a physical exam and/or health update prior to participation in a practice.
4. In addition to being eligible for modified competition, 7th & 8th grade students may participate on a JV or Varsity team if they are approved by the school medical personnel and meet the selection classification standards set by New York State for that sport and level. (see Selection Classification)
5. Juniors are eligible for Junior Varsity competition if they are not sixteen by September 1st.
6. Student athletes in the WSCSD must have all paperwork completed and turned into their coach prior to the first tryout/practice.
7. A student athlete may represent an outside team in the same sport while representing WSCSD. However, if a conflict arises between the two teams, the school team takes preference.

Physical Examinations

In accordance with New York State Education law, any student participating on an organized athletic team must have physical to participate. Physicals are good for a period of one year from the date of the physical. If the physical is more than 30 days prior to the start of the season, a health update must be completed by the parent/guardian. The form is then submitted to the School Nurse to be completed. Students must have a physical and/or update on file in order to participate.

The following options are available to participate on an athletic team:

1. Obtain a physical at the school. By Appointment ONLY.
Please register for an appointment on the website www.wscschools.org click on *athletics* then click on *physicals*.
2. Your child may get a sport physical by their private physician.
3. You may call Health Works (712-0670) to schedule a physical appointment at your convenience and cost.

If you choose to have the physical done by your private physician or HealthWorks, the completed physical form MUST be delivered prior to the start of practice to the school nurse or athletic department

Announcement of physical dates are in the West Seneca Bee, West Seneca Pennysaver, website (www.wscschools.org), given by coach and announced in each building prior to the physical date.

Equipment & Uniforms

All school issued equipment and uniforms must be returned to the coach at the close of the season. The equipment and uniforms are expected to be returned in a reasonable condition considering normal wear and tear. Student athletes are financially responsible for equipment and uniforms that are lost or damaged. The student is to make restitution for or return lost or damaged items. Awards may be withheld and participation denied until restitution has been made.

Code of Conduct

Student athletes are very visible within the school and are often admired and respected. Therefore, it is imperative that student athletes in the WSCSD conduct themselves properly. In addition, student athletes are representing the school system and community while participating in interscholastic athletics.

Student athletes are expected to be cooperative, orderly, and respectful to faculty, staff, and students. Conduct which is insubordinate or which endangers the safety, morals, health, and welfare of others will be subjected to disciplinary action. Student athletes are encouraged to maintain reasonable standards in the areas of dress and grooming.

While representing WSCSD on the playing field, student athletes should: refrain from profanity and vulgarity; never resort to dangerous and illegal tactics; show respect for officials, opposing coaches, opponents, and spectators; be gracious in defeat and humble in victory and avoid physical and verbal confrontations.

Athletic Placement Process (formerly Selection Classification)

Effective Fall 2015, NYS has revised the Athletic Placement Process (formerly Selection Classification Program). This is a process for screening students to determine their readiness to compete in interscholastic athletic competition, at the JV or Varsity level, by evaluating their physical maturity, fitness and skill. The intent of this program is to provide for students in grades 7 & 8 to safely participate at an appropriate level of competition based upon readiness rather than age and grade. This program has been designed to assess a student's physical maturation and physical fitness, so the student may be placed at a level of competition which should result in increased opportunity, a fairer competitive environment, reduced injury, and greater personal satisfaction.

Philosophy of Modified Sports

The WSCSD believes that the primary purpose of the modified program are to provide the student athletes with an opportunity to learn the game, rules and strategies; teach basic skills; allow the student athletes to participate and compete and to train the students for future competition. The main focus of this level is not winning, but to develop student athletes according to the philosophy of the district.

Attendance

Student athletes of the WSCSD are expected to be in regular attendance and on time for school. They must be in attendance for at least half the school day, including physical education, to be eligible for practice or contests, unless excused by the principal.

Schedules

Athletic schedules can be obtained from the school office, athletic office or website (www.wscschools.org) click on athletics.

Transportation

Transportation is provided for all contests outside of West Seneca. All student athletes are required to ride district transportation to and from all away contests. No student may be left off the bus until it arrives back at the school. Student athletes may be released to their own parents/guardians for transportation home. At no time will an athlete be released to anyone other than his/her parents or guardians. Lacrosse sticks and baseball/softball bats will not be allowed on the bus unless they are in a protective carry-on bag.

Insurance

West Seneca Central will not provide insurance for interscholastic athletics. It should be clearly understood that in the event of an injury the school district does not assume any responsibility in paying for the costs incurred by the injury. (see Appendix B)

Injuries

There is a risk of being injured that is inherent in all sports. The injury may be severe, including the risk of fracture, brain surgery, paralysis or even death. An emergency information card must be filed with the coach prior to the first practice. All injuries should be reported to the coach. If an athlete is absent for five or more consecutive days or has an injury which requires medical attention, a written release from a physician is needed before the athlete may return to competition.

Sport Offerings

BOYS		GIRLS
Cross Country (Var/Mod)	FALL	Cheerleading (Var/JV)
Football (Var/JV/Mod)		Cross Country (Var/Mod)
Golf (Var)		Field Hockey (Var/JV/Mod)
Soccer (Var/JV/Mod)		Soccer (Var/JV/Mod)
Volleyball (Var/JV/Mod)		Swim (Var)
		Tennis (Var)
		Volleyball (Var/JV/Mod)
Basketball (Var/JV/Mod)	WINTER	Basketball (Var/JV/Mod)
Bowling (Var)		Bowling (Var)
Ice Hockey (Var)		Cheerleading (Var/JV)
Indoor Track (Var)		Ice Hockey (Var)
Swim (Var/Mod)		Indoor Track (Var)
Wrestling (Var/JV/Mod)		Swim (Mod)
Baseball (Var/JV/Mod)	SPRING	Lacrosse (Var/JV/Mod)
Lacrosse (Var/JV/Mod)		Softball (Var/JV/Mod)
Tennis (Var)		
Track (Var/Mod)		Track (Var/Mod)

Varsity = 11/12 grade; JV = 9/10 grade; Mod = 7/8 grade

Appendix B

INSURANCE RELEASE

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In an effort to eliminate mounting insurance cost to the School District and insurance coverage duplication, the School District ***will not*** provide insurance for interscholastic athletics. It should be clearly understood if in the event of injury, the School District ***does not*** assume any responsibility in paying for the cost from the injury.

There is a risk of your son/daughter being injured that is inherent in all sports. The risk of injury may be severe, including the risk of fracture, brain injury, paralysis or even death.

Your son/daughter ***will not*** be permitted to practice until you have agreed to this policy.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, please call the Athletic Office.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Director of H/PE/Athletics

Appendix A

WSCSD HAZING POLICY

Hazing, in any form, including initiation which is degrading, is strictly forbidden by the school district, as well as New York State law. No student shall conspire to engage in hazing, participate in hazing, or commit any acts that causes or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, personal degradation or disgrace, resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or other person. It is understood that hazing of any kind is not allowed in our athletic program. It is further understood that students/parents have a duty to report any acts of hazing that we see or know of to a coach or administrator. Participation in or failure to report any hazing will result in a disciplinary review and possible suspension and dismissal from the athletic program.

Appendix C - ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICY (revised June 2014)

The West Seneca Central School District extends the privilege of extra-curricular activities to students who recognize their obligation to themselves, their co-participants and their school community while striving for academic excellence. Students must adhere to the district's policy regarding academic co-curricular eligibility, attendance, and good citizenship in and out of the classroom.

Extracurricular activities are defined as any school function NOT grade dependent (e.g.: athletics, intramurals, school musicals, marching band and all clubs/group meetings, activities, tryouts and performances held before or after school). The Extra-Curricular Policy will affect participation in all extra-curricular programs and activities.

Standard

1. The eligibility standard will apply to students in grades 7-12.
2. Students are considered eligible when they have a passing average in all subjects at each time that eligibility is determined (typically every 5 weeks). Students transferring into the district at any time shall have a clean slate for eligibility purposes.
3. Students who are failing **one course** (exclusive of Physical Education) at each 5-week marking period will be placed on **probation**, but will retain eligibility. This includes being able to practice and compete in contests and activities.
4. Students who are failing **two or more courses, or Physical Education (for Athletics)** at each 5-week marking period will automatically be **ineligible** to participate in any interscholastic contests, intramurals, or any extracurricular activities during the next 5-week period. Incomplete grades that are not changed to a passing grade within ten school days after the report cards and/or progress reports are issued will be considered failing grades for eligibility purposes.

Terms of Probation

1. Probation is the 5-week time period where a student must seek remediation with the teacher of his/her failed/INC course(s).

2. Each student on probation will be issued a West Seneca Eligibility Evaluation Form from his/her coach/advisor. Students on probation or ineligible students must seek remediation with teacher of his/her failed/INC course(s) every day.
3. Teachers must sign-off on the eligibility form each time verifying that the student sought remediation that day(s).

Restoring Eligibility

1. At the end of the second full week of remediation, an ineligible student may have their eligibility reinstated by submitting proof of successful remediation using the West Seneca Academic Eligibility Evaluation Form.
 - a. In order for this to occur the student must show the proper motivation and work ethic/effort to be successful in class, and/or elevate his/her grade to a passing grade of 65 or higher.
 - b. An ineligible student may re-establish eligibility at any time after the second full week of remediation. All students on probation will remain on probation for the entire five week period until a new eligibility list has been issued.
 - c. Students forging his/her teachers' initials/signature will lose his/her privileges to participate in the extra-curricular activity for the remainder of the current sports season/semester.

Procedure

1. Activity advisors/coaches are required to generate a student roster in PowerSchool immediately following the first practice of the season or first activity meeting.
2. Activity advisors/coaches are required to review their student members' standing and determine eligibility at five week increments beginning at week five and concluding at week 35 (as per the academic calendar).
3. Activity advisors/coaches will meet with ineligible students and/or students on probation and will be given the West Seneca Academic Eligibility Form.
4. Activity advisors/coaches will contact the student's parent/guardian to inform them of the terms of their probation/ineligibility.
5. Activity advisors/coaches will submit a list to administration of ineligible students and students on probation.
6. A letter to the parents/guardians will be generated from building administration confirming the status of the student's eligibility.

Appeal Process

A parent/guardian may request an appeal by submitting written notification to the building principal no more than five school days after receiving notification from the school. The Academic Eligibility Committee consists of: a building administrator, athletic director, coach or advisor and the teacher(s) whose class(es) are being failed. The committee will have the authority to remove students from the ineligibility list if it is determined there is adequate cause for such action due to a student's ability or recent extenuating circumstances.

Furthermore, the building principal may exclude a student from participation for a period of time if he/she deems necessary based on the severity and/or chronic nature of academic, behavioral or attendance difficulties.

Appendix D

WEST SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY FOR ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

1. During the season (first day of practice to the last day of competition or until uniform/equipment is accounted for) a student-athlete or activities participant will not manufacture, distribute, possess, procure, or use illegal drugs or controlled substances, alcohol or tobacco products. Possession means having physical possession.
 - A. Clubs/Activities will use the following ending dates per "season".
Fall – December 21st Winter – March 21st Spring – June 21st
2. Reports of a violation (from above) coming from: a district employee, an adult acting as a chaperone, a law enforcement officer or agency, or a parent/legal guardian of a student involved in an alleged violation, will be investigated.
 - A. Reports of alleged violations from persons other than those mentioned above must be submitted by the person witnessing the incident. Such report will then be given consideration by the Building Principal and/or Director of Athletics.

Responses to Violation

First Violation:

Upon determination that a violation has occurred, the student shall be removed from participation in any and all extracurricular and/or interscholastic activities for a period of four (4) weeks. The student will be reinstated after two (2) weeks of the suspension if the student provides documentation/verification of attendance at a voluntary session for substance abuse prevention education.

- Suspension will begin the day school district personnel determine that a violation has occurred.

Appendix E

Concussion Management and Awareness

A **concussion** “is a type of traumatic brain injury that results from a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or by a hit to the body, that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, stretching and damaging brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.” Concussion and the changes it causes in the brain can lead to symptoms that may affect a student’s cognitive, physical, and emotional and sleep functions. Concussion can occur both on and off the athletic field and can impact an injured student’s abilities for weeks or months.

In 2011, New York State passed the Concussion Management and Awareness Act, which takes effect July 1, 2012. The Act and recent Commissioner’s Regulations outline the actions school districts must take to protect young athletes and care for them after an injury occurs.

As part of this Concussion and Management Act, school districts must inform and make parents and student-athletes aware of concussions. This information should include:

- *the definition of a concussion*
- *signs and symptoms of mild traumatic brain injuries, how mild traumatic brain injuries may occur*
- *guidelines for return to school and school activities of a pupil who has suffered a mild traumatic brain injury, regardless of whether such injury occurred inside or outside of school*

Fact sheets from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on “**Heads –Up**” **Concussion in High School Sports** for both parents and student-athletes follow. Please read through information carefully and thoroughly.

Second Violation:

Upon determination of a second violation, the student will be removed from participation in any and all extracurricular and/or interscholastic activities for the remainder of the current season and the ensuing season. (i.e. 2nd violation occurs during football, the student must sit out winter season. If 2nd violation occurs during softball, the student must sit out fall season. See 1A)

- Students will not be allowed to earn any awards or attend the awards ceremony.

Procedures

1. Upon report of an alleged violation or if the student admits a violation has occurred, the Building Principal and/or Director of Athletics shall provide **verbal notice** to the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) that an investigation of the alleged violation is/has been taking place. The reasons for the investigation and the possibility of suspension or removal from the activity will be included in the notice.
2. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will meet the Principal, Director of Athletics, Assistant Principal and other staff, as appropriate, within two (2) school days following the initial notification. Those attending will be given the opportunity to submit additional information or explanation of the alleged violation.
3. The Principal, Director of Athletics, Assistant Principal, as appropriate, will make a final determination and within two (2) days of conducting the investigation, give verbal and written notice to the student, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the coach or advisor.

Revised 01/16/2001

HEADS*UP CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **PARENTS**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

What are the signs and symptoms?

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days after the injury. If your teen reports **one or more** symptoms of concussion listed below, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, keep your teen out of play and seek medical attention right away.

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears dazed or stunned • Is confused about assignment or position • Forgets an instruction • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly • Loses consciousness (even briefly) • Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes • Can't recall events prior to hit or fall • Can't recall events after hit or fall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache or “pressure” in head • Nausea or vomiting • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or blurry vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion • Just not “feeling right” or is “feeling down”

How can you help your teen prevent a concussion?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your teens can take to protect themselves from concussion and other injuries.

- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. It should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.

- Ensure that they follow their coaches' rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

What should you do if you think your teen has a concussion?

1. **Keep your teen out of play.** If your teen has a concussion, her/his brain needs time to heal. Don't let your teen return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says your teen is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.
2. **Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your teen to return to sports.
3. **Teach your teen that it's not smart to play with a concussion.** Rest is key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your teen convince you that s/he's “just fine.”
4. **Tell all of your teen's coaches and the student's school nurse about ANY concussion.** Coaches, school nurses, and other school staff should know if your teen has ever had a concussion. Your teen may need to limit activities while s/he is recovering from a concussion. Things such as studying, driving, working on a computer, playing video games, or exercising may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Talk to your health care professional, as well as your teen's coaches, school nurse, and teachers. If needed, they can help adjust your teen's school activities during her/his recovery.

If you think your teen has a concussion:

Don't assess it yourself. Take him/her out of play. Seek the advice of a health care professional.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information and to order additional materials *free-of-charge*, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



June 2010

HEADS*UP CONCUSSION IN HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

A FACT SHEET FOR **ATHLETES**

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- Can change the way your brain normally works.
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport or recreational activity.
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- Can be serious even if you've just been “dinged” or “had your bell rung.”

All concussions are serious. A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities (such as playing video games, working on a computer, studying, driving, or exercising). Most people with a concussion get better, but it is important to give your brain time to heal.

What are the symptoms of a concussion?

You can't see a concussion, but you might notice **one or more** of the symptoms listed below or that you “don't feel right” soon after, a few days after, or even weeks after the injury.

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion

What should I do if I think I have a concussion?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach right away if you think you have a concussion or if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical check-up.** A doctor or other health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it is OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes for you to recover and may cause more damage to your brain. It is important to rest and not return to play until you get the OK from your health care professional that you are symptom-free.

How can I prevent a concussion?

- Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment. In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:
 - The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
 - Worn correctly and the correct size and fit
 - Used every time you play or practice
 - Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
 - Practice good sportsmanship at all times.

If you think you have a concussion:
Don't hide it. Report it. Take time to recover.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

For more information and to order additional materials *free-of-charge*, visit: www.cdc.gov/Concussion.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



June 2010

This Information will also be available on our school district athletic website.