

**Ambridge Area School District  
Athletic Department**

**ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK**



**Ambridge Area School District Mission Statement:**

**The mission of the Ambridge Area School District is to be the  
“Bridge” to leading and learning, preparing students for the future  
through academic excellence.**

**Vision Statement**

*To positively impact the lives of others,  
we will develop and support a premier athletic program  
built on a tradition of integrity and excellence,  
while upholding high academic, social, and athletic standards.*

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## *MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF ATHLETIC PROGRAMS FOR THE AMBRIDGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT*

### **ORGANIZATION**

Superintendent: Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla  
Assistant to the Superintendent: Dr. Amy Filipowski  
Special Education Director: Dr. Amy Filipowski  
Business Manager: Michelle Amadio  
District Maintenance Supervisor: Kevin Martin  
Registration: Cathy Hopkins  
Human Resources: Mary Jo Sivy

High School Principal: Dr. Janice Zupsic  
High School Assistant Principal: Anthony Amadio  
Attendance Secretary: Lori Chickos

Athletic Director: Anthony Amadio  
Athletic Secretary: Maria Kotula  
Athletic Trainers: Amanda Miller, Kalynn Wheeland

School Resource Officer: Anthony Phan

Ambridge Area Middle School Principal: David DiCaprio  
Ambridge Area Middle School Assistant Principal: Mark Iwanejko  
Economy Elementary School Principal: Aphrodite Galitsis  
Highland Elementary School Principal: Stephanie Hull  
State Street Elementary School Principal: JoAnn Hoover

### **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Ambridge Area School District does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, gender, creed or any other legally-protected category. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with State Law including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and with Federal law, including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

For more information, or to file a complaint, please contact:

**EEO Coordinator: Dr. Amy Filipowski, 724.266.2833 x1219**  
**or Title IX Compliance Officer: Dr. Amy Filipowski, 724.266.2833 x1219**  
**901 Duss Avenue, Ambridge, PA 15003**

## **AASD PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

The Board of School Directors believes that the purpose of an interscholastic athletic program is to provide learning experiences that will contribute to the personal, physical, and psychological development of the individual student athlete. These learning experiences will be consistent with the educational goals of the Ambridge Area School District and will complement the academic program of the district. Hence, participation in interscholastic athletics can serve an important role in meeting the needs of our students within the total educational process.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS** **PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES & THE 4 PILLARS**

As practitioners, teachers and coaches alike are committed to continuous improvement of AASD Teaching Practices, Leadership Practices, and Organizational Practices because they are the preconditions for higher levels of student achievement. The AASD “Four Pillars” are the building blocks of the district’s professional practices; they frame what must be done in every “classroom”, and system-wide to ensure success for all students, without exception.

#### **PILLAR #1: CULTURE OF TRUST, RELATIONSHIPS, AND COLLABORATION**

Build trust and relationships with open communication that promotes effective collaboration among all partners in the teaching and learning community.

#### **PILLAR #2: RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Curriculum, instruction, and learning are shaped by a growth mindset and guided by principles of differentiation.

#### **PILLAR #3: HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL**

Beliefs and practices reflect universally held high standards and shared responsibility for continuous growth and improvement.

#### **PILLAR #4: WELCOMING, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING AND WORK**

Learning occurs in safe environments that support the needs of all students and adults and provide a welcoming environment where positive academic and prudent personal risk-taking are encouraged.

### **Ambridge Athletics** **Positive Performance Pathway**

Know and do what is right.

Do it with relentless effort.

Do it with kindness, compassion, and care for others.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook has been developed to assist the coaches of the Ambridge Area School District in serving the students that elect to take part in the interscholastic athletic program. The handbook contains athletic department procedures, regulations, and other information that will be helpful to coaches in administering, maintaining, and supervising the athletic program.

In addition to the materials presented in this handbook, all members of the athletic department must familiarize themselves with the rules of the sports they coach, as well as the rules and regulations found in the constitution and by-laws of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

### **Ambridge Interscholastic Athletic Program**

<b><u>FALL</u></b>	<b><u>WINTER</u></b>	<b><u>SPRING</u></b>
CROSS COUNTRY *HS & MS	BOYS/GIRLS BASKETBALL *HS & MS	BASEBALL *HS & MS
BOYS/GIRLS GOLF	BOWLING	SOFTBALL *HS & MS
BOYS/GIRLS SOCCER *HS & MS	CHEERLEADING *HS & MS	GIRLS LACROSSE *CLUB
CHEERLEADING *HS & MS	WRESTLING *HS & MS	BOYS TENNIS
FOOTBALL *HS & MS	MS GIRLS VOLLEYBALL *STARTS IN FEBRUARY	TRACK & FIELD *HS & MS
GIRLS TENNIS		BOYS VOLLEYBALL *HS & MS
GIRLS VOLLEYBALL		GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL *CLUB
MS GIRLS BASKETBALL *STARTS IN OCTOBER		



## **PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

The Ambridge Area School District interscholastic athletic program is both voluntary and competitive and will be designed to meet the needs of student-athletes at each level of play. In order to participate, student-athletes must be physically healthy, academically qualified, and willing to make a significant personal commitment to maximize the development of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes relative to the particular sport.

The interscholastic athletic program will be increasingly competitive as students progress from junior high/middle school through the junior varsity to the varsity levels. All decisions, including team size, will support and reflect these goals at each competitive level. Varsity coaches will work with junior varsity, and middle school coaches to coordinate the developmental aspects of the program in each particular sport.

### **Middle School**

At the middle school level of interscholastic competition, coaches will place a strong emphasis on instruction and on maintaining sufficient levels of participation in that sport to allow the individual student athlete to develop his/her athletic potential. Participation and development of skills in a sport will be valued above the winning of contests. The needs of the team should be balanced with the developmental needs of the individual team members. Coaches are also encouraged to award playing time for measures such as effort, good citizenship, good sportsmanship, as well as demonstrated game play.

### **Junior Varsity**

At the junior varsity level, instruction, and the development of individual skills for all athletes will continue to be emphasized; however, team success in inter-school competition will also be valued. Athletes will become increasingly aware of the importance of teamwork, hard work, and a positive attitude toward team success and the earning of playing time.

### **Varsity**

At the varsity level of interscholastic competition, coaches will have the dual responsibility of fostering individual skill development and achieving team success. To achieve this end, the most effective student-athletes as judged by the coaching staff, regardless of grade level, will be given the opportunity to further develop their athletic abilities and to participate at the most advanced levels of interscholastic athletic competition. Coaching emphasis will be placed on helping the members of the team to work together and to develop a strong desire to attain the highest possible levels of team success.

## **The Role of the Head Coach**

The Head Coach is responsible for providing overall leadership and guidance to student-athletes and assistant coaches as well as providing an overall vision for the program. Head coaches are expected to be a positive, passionate, enthusiastic individual who will not only instruct student-athletes in fundamental skills, strategy, and physical training, but also guide and mentor them to be driven and responsible student-athletes and citizens. The Head Coach reports to and works closely with the Athletic Directors to determine goals and direction of the program.

## **The Role of the Assistant Coaches**

The Assistant Coach is responsible for supporting the Head Coach and his/her overall vision for the program as well as providing leadership and guidance to student-athletes and the other assistant coaches. Assistant coaches are expected to be a positive, passionate, enthusiastic member of the program who will not only instruct student-athletes in fundamental skills, strategy, and physical training, but also guide and mentor them to be driven and responsible student-athletes and citizens. The assistant coach reports to and works closely with both the program head coach and the Athletic Directors to determine goals and direction of the team.

## **What the School District Expects From Our Coaches/Staff:**

- Uphold the *Positive Performance Pathway*; to know and do what is right, with relentless effort, with kindness and compassion towards others
- To have fun
- To serve as a role model for your student-athletes. Never underestimate the influence you have on the young people in your charge
- Employ safe and educationally sound techniques designed to actively promote the development of the student-athlete as a whole person
- To be familiar and utilize the Ambridge Area Athletics Emergency Action Plan if necessary
- To remember that how you treat and develop your student-athletes is more important than how many games you win.
- To be supportive of the entire athletic program and school community
- To conduct yourself and program in an ethical manner
- To keep athletics in perspective; remember that although athletics is important, it is but a small component of a student's total education
- To be open-minded and receptive to recommendations and constructive criticism which you may receive from the school district
- To continually improve their coaching techniques through participation in appropriate professional development programs
- Attend conference preseason and postseason meetings. If you are unable to attend, a representative will be identified to attend in your absence. If no representative is available, communication will be made to the conference lead or sports chair.
- Attend PIAA rules interpretation meetings.

### **What You Should Expect From the School District:**

- Uphold the *Positive Performance Pathway*: to know and do what is right, with relentless effort, with kindness and compassion towards others
- To have fun
- To provide you and the student-athletes with the encouragement, support, and resources necessary to develop
- To conduct the overall sport program in an ethical manner
- To be open-minded and receptive to recommendations and constructive criticism which the school district may receive from you
- To keep athletics in perspective; although athletics is important, it is but a small component of a student's total education
- To provide you with opportunities and recommendations to help you grow as a person and coach
- To offer criticism in a private setting
- To support you against unfair and unfounded criticism and attacks

### **Athletic Department Objectives:**

1. To support the athletic department vision of, "To positively impact the lives of others, we will develop and support a premier athletic program built on a tradition of integrity and excellence, while upholding high academic, social, and athletic standards"
2. To complement the primary function of the school which is learning
3. To develop a positive program of interscholastic athletics in the Ambridge Area School District
4. To represent the Ambridge Area School District and its interscholastic athletic program in a positive and constructive manner
5. To strive for playing excellence
6. To provide opportunities for the individual's:
  - physical, mental and emotional growth and development
  - acquisition and development of special skills in activities of each student's choice
  - development of desirable social traits such as loyalty, cooperation and fair play
  - development of leadership skills
  - achievement of goals
  - commitment to team goals over individual effort and recognition
7. To develop an athletic program that meets a wide range of interests

### **Community Objectives:**

1. The community should realize that control of and responsibility for school athletics rests entirely with the school authorities
2. School athletics should furnish a recreational opportunity for the general public as long as a community is willing to see that the program is conducted solely for the benefit of student competition and student spectators.
3. The community should judge the success of the season on the number of participants, the number of spectators, new skills acquired, and good citizenship

and good sportsmanship taught, rather than on the number of games won or lost.

4. The community should constantly keep in mind that an athletic contest is part of the school program and therefore is governed by the same philosophy.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Students/Spectators:**

Students' habits and reactions as spectators determine the quality of sportsmanship, which reflects upon the reputation of their school. Therefore, it is recommended that they:

1. Know and demonstrate the fundamentals of sportsmanship.
2. Respect, cooperate and respond enthusiastically to cheerleaders.
3. Help to control the unruly behavior of fellow students.
4. Respect the property of the school and the authority of school officials.
5. Show respect for an injured player when they are removed from the contest.
6. Never criticize coaches or players for the loss of a game.
7. Respect the judgment of game officials or referees.
8. Refrain from using obscene or vulgar language.
9. Respect the efforts of all participants (home or visitor).
10. Conduct yourself with proper respect during public address announcements and the playing of the National Anthem.
11. The school district has the right to restrict students from attending or participating in any athletic activities.

## **BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS**

The Board of School Directors shall set policy with regard to the conducting of the athletic programs within the Ambridge Area School District and shall make all decisions as are required by law.

## **THE PRINCIPAL**

The Principal in each school, in all matters pertaining to the interscholastic athletic programs of the school, is responsible to the PIAA. He/she may delegate some of these powers but such delegation shall not relieve him/her of responsibility for any infraction by his/her school, of the Constitution and By-Laws of the PIAA.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

1. To have control over all athletic relations in which the school participates. This applies to interscholastic sports for both boys and girls.
2. To sanction all contests in which the school participates and to notify the Executive Director of the PIAA within ten days if the school has entered a contest which has not been sanctioned.

3. To exclude any contestant who, because of bad habits, or improper conduct, would not represent the school in a becoming manner and, to exclude any contestant who has suffered illness or injury until that contestant is pronounced physically fit by the school physician or, if none employed, by another licensed physician.
4. To be responsible for the treatment of all visitors and officials attending contests conducted by the school. Penalties may be imposed upon a member school whose principal fails to provide reasonable protections for officials and visitors at home games. If a game is played at a neutral place, the principals of the participating schools shall be held jointly responsible for this protection. In such cases, penalties may be imposed upon either or both schools.
5. To see that all contracts for interscholastic athletic contests in which his/her school participates are in writing and bear their signature or designee's signature.
6. All written contracts with officials shall be signed by the principal, athletic director or, by one principal representing a league, conference, or school.
7. To be responsible for certifying in writing the eligibility of all contestants in accordance with the By-Laws of the PIAA.
8. The Principal shall have such other powers concerning interscholastic athletics within the school as are in keeping with the growth and needs of the school and which are consistent with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the PIAA.

### **COACHES CODE OF ETHICS**

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. The student-athlete's welfare should be paramount at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Coaches Association:

1. **The coach** shall be aware that he/she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student athlete and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
2. **The coach** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with student-athletes, officials, athletic directors, fellow coaches, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
3. **The coach** shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use.
4. **The coach** will not use alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
5. **The coach** shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his/her program in harmony with the total school program.

6. **The coach** shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
7. **The coach** shall exert his/her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.
8. **The coach** shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
9. **Before and after contests**, coaches for the competing teams should meet and exchange cordial greetings to set the correct tone for the event.
10. **A coach** shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student-athletes special consideration.
11. **A coach** shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.

### **LEGAL DUTIES OF COACHES AND ATHLETICS PERSONNEL** **(Related to Negligence Litigation)**

Coaches have both a moral and legal obligation to protect the student-athletes in their charge. While the moral obligations are extremely important, the legal ones are equally important when it comes to determining liability in a legal case against a coach. There are duties coaches need to address if they are in fact going to protect their student-athletes and in so doing protect themselves and the school district. Coaches today not only must know what their routine duties are in relation to their job, but they must also know what their legal duties are.

Legal duties are defined as the responsibility of a coach to take reasonable care of his/her student-athletes. A coach must provide the safest environment possible in his/her specific situation.

In order to have a successful lawsuit against a coach or school district, the plaintiff must prove that all four elements of a tort are met. The four elements are 1) That a duty exists, 2) there has been a breach of that duty, 3) the breach of duty was the direct cause of the injury, and 4) there was in fact injury or damage. Without the identification of the duty, the first element, the other three are meaningless.

Several obligations or duties have been identified as absolute requirements for coaches and athletics personnel. These standards have evolved as a result of various case law proceedings and legal judgments against individuals and school districts.

1. **Duty to Plan** – This is a comprehensive requirement that transcends all other duties. Inherent in this duty is the need to continually conduct focused analyses and to develop responsive strategies that prevent or reduce injury and loss in the following areas: coaching competence; medical screening; appropriate activities

that consider age, maturity and environmental conditions; facility and equipment evaluation and improvement; injury response; warnings to student-athletes and their families; insurance of student-athletes; child advocacy in cases of alcohol and other drug abuse or family neglect or abuse. Plans and policies should be committed to paper and should be rigorously implemented unless dangerous conditions prevent implementation. Plans and policies should be retained in safe storage. Negligence can be alleged when an injury loss results from no planning, inadequate planning or when plans are developed but ignored.

2. **Duty to Instruct Properly** – Athletic practices must be characterized by instruction that accounts for a logical sequence of fundamentals that lead to an enhanced progression of player knowledge, skill and capability. Instruction must move from simple to complex and unknown to known. Coaches must be properly prepared to provide appropriate and sequential instruction and to identify and avoid dangerous practices or conditions. Instruction must demonstrate appropriate and safe techniques and must include warnings about unsafe techniques and prohibited practices.  
In addition, practices must account for a progression of cardiovascular and musculoskeletal conditioning, regimens that prepare student-athletes sequentially for more challenging practices and competitive activities. Consideration must be given to weather, maturation and readiness factors.
3. **Duty to Maintain Safe Playing Conditions** – Coaches are considered trained professionals who possess a higher level of knowledge and skill that permits them to identify foreseeable causes of injury inherent in defective equipment or hazardous environments. Courts have held athletic supervisors responsible to improve unsafe environments, repair or remove defective equipment or disallow student-athlete's access. In addition, weather conditions must be considered. Student-athletes should not be subjected to intense or prolonged conditioning during periods of extreme heat and humidity or when frostbite may be a factor. In addition, a plan for monitoring and responding to dangerous weather conditions is necessary. Building codes and laws must be observed and implemented with respect to capacity, ventilation, air filtration and lighting.
4. **Duty To Provide Proper Equipment** – Coaches and athletic administrators must ensure student-athletes are properly equipped with clean, durable and safe equipment. This is especially important for protective equipment, which must carry a *National Operating Commission on Safety in Athletic Equipment* (NOCSAE) certification and must be checked for proper fit and wearing. Student-athletes must wear protective equipment any time they are exposed to the full rigors of contact in practice or competition. Selection of equipment must also consider the age and maturity of the athletes.
5. **Duty to Provide Proper Transportation** – In general, bonded, commercial carriers should be used for out-of-town transportation. Self or family transportation for local competition may be allowable if parents have adequate

insurance coverage for team members other than their family members. The age and maturity of student-athletes should always be considered when allowing student-athletes to use public transportation to travel to a local contest. Student-athletes should be prohibited from driving to an out-of-town competition, scrimmage, or practice without expressed written consent from a parent/guardian.

6. **Duty to Match Athletes** – Student-athletes should be matched with consideration for maturity, skill, age, size, speed, experience, and incapacitating conditions including individual and team mismatches. Mismatches should be avoided in all categories.
7. **Duty to Assess Athletes Readiness For Practice and Competition** – Athletic administrators and coaches are required to assess the health and physical or maturational readiness skills and physical condition of student-athletes. Student-athletes must be medically screened in accordance with state association regulations before participating in practice or competition. Moreover, some children may require specialized medical assessment to ascertain the existence of congenital disorders or the existence of a physical condition that predisposes the student-athlete to injury. In addition, injured student-athletes who require the services of a physician may not return to practice or competition without written permission of the physician. Plans should become policy documents and updated regularly by administrators, coaches and experts in specific areas (e.g., equipment, emergency response etc.) A new area of concern that may grow from this duty is the difficulty of assessing the readiness of handicapped children who are referred for practice or competition under the *Americans with Disabilities Act or the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975*. In these cases, it is imperative that medical and multi-disciplinary team approval and recommendation be obtained before a handicapped student becomes a candidate for practice and competition.
8. **Duty to Supervise** – A coach must be physically present, provide competent instruction, structure practices that are appropriate for the age and maturity of players, prevent foreseeable injuries and respond to injury or trauma in an approved manner. Supervision pertains to both primary and secondary areas. This duty requires supervisors (coaches) to ensure that facilities are locked and that students are denied access when a competent staff member cannot be physically present to supervise. This duty may also require coaches to control reckless player behaviors. Supervision responsibilities also pertain to athletic administrators who are expected to be able to supervise coaching staff members competently. In addition, athletic administrators are expected to supervise contests to ensure that spectators do not create an unsafe or disruptive environment. A further extension of this duty is the need to supervise the condition, safe usage, maintenance and upkeep of equipment and facilities.



9. **Duty to Provide Emergency Care** – Coaches are expected to be able to administer approved, prioritized, standard first aid procedures in response to a range of traumatic injuries within their knowledge base.
10. **Duty To Develop An Emergency Response Plan** – Athletic administrators and coaches must develop site-specific plans for managing uninjured team members while emergency care is being administered to an injured student-athlete. In addition, plans must be in place to: ensure access to a stocked first aid kit, spine board and other emergency response equipment; access to a telephone; ensure a timely call to EMS; to expedite rapid access by EMS to the injured athlete by stationing coaches or team members at driveways, parking lots, entry doors and remote hallways.
11. **Duty To Foresee Potential Danger** – Foreseeability is a common term found in litigation related to sport today. A prudent coach should be able to foresee the potential danger that may occur if activity is continued in that facility, or with that equipment, or in that situation, and should take action to prevent the activity from continuing without correcting the problem.

Sources: Coalition of Americans to Protect Sports (CAPS), Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA)

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

It is the responsibility of the coaching staff to assist in offering a program that is in the best interest of the athletes in terms of their personal health and safety. A sound program in risk-management specific to the sport being coached must be developed.

## **LEAVING A TEACHING POSITION TO ATTEND ATHLETIC EVENTS / PRACTICES**

### **A. Early Dismissal for Athletic Events:**

Away Games: Coaches may be excused from their teaching duties 30 minutes before the student-athlete dismissal time when staffing is available.

Home Games: Coaches may be excused:

- If you teach in the same building as you coach: 15 minutes prior to student-athlete dismissal time, if prior to the end of daytime
- If you teach in an different building as you coach: 30 minutes prior to student-athlete dismissal time, if prior to the end of day time

*\* Volunteer Coaches, who are AASD employees, must work with your building administrator and athletic director to determine suitable arrangements for dismissals.*

**B. Absence from Other District Position:**

A coach who is absent from her/his other District position(s) is not permitted to attend a team practice or competition that day unless the coach has received approval to do so in advance from the Athletic Director. If a coach uses a sick day they are not permitted to be in attendance at practices or events.

Expectation:

- When completing an absence in Frontline/AESOP, note the reason for absence within the notes section and anticipated coaching obligations for that day
- Any absence from his/her district position the coach must notify the athletic director(s)

If you have any questions or concerns about these guidelines or anything else with regard to our athletic coaches, call the Athletic Director.

**C. Responsibilities / Expectations of Coaches to attend Faculty and/or Department Meetings:**

Coaches and AASD paid event staff must get pre-approval from principal in order to be excused from department and/or faculty meetings on days of games/contests. Coaches are required to attend faculty and/or department meetings and then attend the practices. Considerations will include:

- The ability to move practice times (if possible)
- Review supervision responsibilities to assure there is proper coverage by paid AASD coaches.

Advanced communication with the building principal is expected if a coach feels the above two items are not able to be met without missing the meeting.

**BUSING AND TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES****Assignment of Vehicles to Interscholastic Athletic Events**

The mode of transportation for all regular-season and post-season away contests will be assigned according to consistent standards as follows:

1. All teams will travel via district transportation to all away contests.
2. All teams numbering 9 or fewer students with one adult supervisor or multiples of such will travel via school van. You must present a VALID PA. Driver's License before receiving keys to a van.
3. Coach buses have a 55-seat capacity - please plan accordingly.

Note: Out-of-season travel is not covered by the district, and any other consideration will be determined by the coach, athletic department, and transportation department.

## **Van Use Protocol**

Coaches using AASD vans for student-athlete transportation must follow the AASD Van Protocol listed below:

1. You must present a VALID PA. Driver's License before receiving keys to a van.
2. You cannot leave the (transportation) office until your driving record has been checked.
3. You are responsible for a pre-trip walk around. Record all damage to the van. If there is damage, take a picture with your phone to document.
4. When the van is returned damaged, you are responsible for any damage not recorded.
5. You are responsible for any parking fines or traffic fines incurred while the van is in your possession.
6. The van must be kept locked at all times.
7. Stow any valuables out of site.
8. Park the van in a secure, well-lit area.

## **"Out of District" Event Weather Procedures**

### **Before Trip**

- The athletic director will monitor weather conditions at least 24 hours prior to after-school or weekend events.
- If anticipated weather conditions may adversely affect the event, the athletic director will contact the carrier.
- The advisory will include a recommendation as to whether the trip should proceed as scheduled. The athletic director will then make a final decision. The athletic director will convey the decision to the carrier.

### **During Trip**

- If unexpected adverse weather conditions affect safe travel, the driver and school staff on board will confer. If there's a difference of opinions, the driver's opinion will take precedence.
- If possible, the conference should occur prior to departure from the event. If departure has already occurred, the bus should be pulled off the roadway at the nearest safe location. The decision of the conference is to be communicated as follows:

### **First Contact: The Carrier**

When the carrier is notified, the carrier will use the following sequence until they personally contact any of the listed school administrative staff (voice message or email not acceptable).

**Second Contact: School District Staff**

If the carrier can't be contacted, the driver or school staff on board will use the following sequence until they personally contact any of the listed school administrative staff (voice message or email not acceptable).

Name	Title	Phone Number
Anthony Amadio	High School Assistant Principal/Athletic Director	724-266-2833 Ext. 2235
Janice Zupsic	High School Principal	724-266-2833 Ext. 2287
Amy Filipowski	Asst. Superintendent/ Transportation	724-266-2833 Ext. 1219
Joseph Pasquerilla	Superintendent	724-266-2833 Ext. 1263

**ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

High school interscholastic sports programs in Pennsylvania are governed by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). As a member district, we must follow the policies and regulations formulated by the association. Regulations include:

1. **AGE:** You may not have reached your 19th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year. (16th birthday where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 through 9 and 15<sup>th</sup> birthday where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 and 8.)
2. **AMATEUR STATUS AND AWARDS:** A pupil must be an amateur to be eligible to participate in a PIAA sponsored interscholastic athletic contest. You will lose your amateur status in a sport for at least a year if:
  - a. You or your school, or an organization which you represent, or your parent or guardian, receives money or property for or related to your athletic ability, performance, participation or services.
  - b. You accept compensation for teaching, training or coaching in a sport. You may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities, or for serving as a lifeguard at swimming areas.

3. **ATTENDANCE:** A pupil must be regularly enrolled in a secondary school in full-time attendance. A pupil who has been absent from school for a total of twenty or more days in a semester shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has attended school for a total of 45 school days following the twenty days of absence. An exception may be considered by a district committee where there is an extended absence of five or more consecutive days due to illness or injury.

4. **PARTICIPATION AND GRADE REPETITION:** You will lose your eligibility when you have been in attendance more than eight semesters beyond the eighth grade. If you repeat a grade after eight, you will be ineligible as a senior. You may participate only one season in each sport during each school year.

5. **OUTSIDE PARTICIPATION:** You will lose your eligibility in a sport for the remainder of the season if, while a member of your high school team, you participate in an athletic contest as an individual or a member of another team in the same sport during the same season, unless your school principal waives this rule by sending an appropriate letter to the PIAA Executive Director.

6. **ALL-STAR CONTESTS:** You will lose your eligibility in that sport for one year if you participate in an all-star contest in that sport.

7. **OUT-OF-SEASON PARTICIPATION:** Almost all PIAA sports have a defined season. If your team conducts and/or plays a contest after the concluding date for the PIAA season in a sport, you will lose your eligibility for one year in that sport.

8. **CONSENT OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN:** A pupil shall be eligible for participation in each sport only when there is on file with the principal a certificate of consent signed by a parent or guardian.

9. **HEALTH:** No pupil shall be eligible to represent the school in any interscholastic contest unless he/she has been examined by a licensed physician of medicine or osteopathy or by a certified nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant before you begin to practice for your first sports season of the academic year. Before each subsequent sports season of the same academic year, you must be reexamined or certified that your condition is satisfactory before you begin to practice in the sport. Wrestlers must also obtain from the physician or certified school nurse practitioner, prior to the beginning of practice, a certification of the minimum weight class at which they may wrestle for the entire season.

10. **CURRICULUM:** A pupil must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time curriculum. This curriculum must be approved and conform to the regulations of the State Board of Education, the Pennsylvania School Code, and any places established by the local school board. An acceptable grade must be maintained, and eligibility shall be cumulative from the beginning of a grading period and reported on a weekly basis. A pupil must have passed at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, during the previous grading period.

A student declared ineligible due to grades in a preceding grading period shall be ineligible to participate for the first four weeks of the next grading period. Eligibility for the first grading period is based on your final grades for the preceding school year.

### **AASD ELIGIBILITY FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS**

1. **Physical Examination:** In addition to Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association regulations regarding the physical examination, the Ambridge Area School District requires the participant to have had a tetanus immunization within 10 years prior to the beginning of the sports season. Students not satisfying this requirement will not be permitted to participate until they have a tetanus booster or present a waiver signed by their parent/guardian.
2. **Attendance:** Specific school rules regarding academic progress, attendance, and behavior influence a student's day-to-day eligibility. A student must arrive at school no later than 11:00 A.M or have attended a minimum of 4 periods to participate in a sporting event or practice. Friday attendance will affect eligibility for Saturday activities. Exceptions for absence for educational and religious and medical reasons will be made where prior approval has been granted.
3. **Suspension:** When a student has been suspended out-of-school, the student may not visit any school campus during the duration of the suspension, nor may the student participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletic practices or competitions. Students may resume participation in extracurricular activities on the day they resume school.
4. **In-school Suspension:** When a student is suspended in-school, the student may not visit any school campus during the duration of the suspension, nor may the student participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletic practices or competitions. Students may resume participation in extracurricular activities on the day they resume school.

### **Declaration of Ineligibility**

When declared ineligible for competition because of inability to meet PIAA academic or attendance standards, an athlete may - with approval of the coach - attend and participate in practice/meeting or accompany the team to competition (*not in uniform*). When declared ineligible for practice, meeting or competition because of inability to meet the AASD daily attendance requirement, an athlete may not participate in practice, meeting or competition for that day nor accompany the team during them.

## **PARTICIPATION OF SECONDARY *HOME-SCHOOLED* STUDENTS IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

Home-schooled secondary students residing within the Ambridge Area School District shall be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at the age-group school within their regular attendance area. Each student shall be required to follow the rules of the team and school, the policies of the Ambridge Area School District and the rules and regulations of the PIAA.

Transportation to and from scheduled practices and events is the responsibility of the parents of the home-schooled students except where late bus transportation and team transportation are provided by the District.

### **Procedures and Responsibilities**

Parents of homeschooled students who wish to have their children participate in interscholastic athletics within the school district have the following responsibilities:

1. Register their children with the superintendent's office by March 15 of the school year previous to the one during which they wish to participate.
2. Submit a completed PIAA physical card and related forms to the District's athletic trainer before participation in tryouts, practices or competitions.
3. Prior to participation, verify with the superintendent's office the following conditions:
  - a. That their student was enrolled in and passed a minimum of four (4) full-year subjects during the last school year. This is the equivalent to four (4) credits.
  - b. That their student was not absent from instruction more than twenty (20) days during the previous semester unless eligible for exemption as stated in Article III, Section 2 of the PIAA By-laws.
  - c. That their student is enrolled in four (4) full-year, four (4) credit equivalent courses during the current school year.
4. After participation has begun, notify weekly or daily as directed by the District's athletic director if the student does not meet AASD and PIAA eligibility requirements for academic or attendance reasons.
5. The Ambridge Area School District will perform the following responsibilities:
  - a. Announce and supervise the registration process.
  - b. Announce physical exam information through the local media.
  - c. Contact parents of home-schooled students with information regarding AASD and PIAA academic and attendance requirements for interscholastic eligibility.
  - d. Furnish the name(s) and related information of any home-schooled students wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics for the school year to the appropriate coach(es).
  - e. Contact registered parent(s)/student(s) with information about orientation meetings, schedules, tryouts, practices, etc. for the upcoming season.

## **PARTICIPATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

Secondary students attending charter school of the Ambridge Area School District shall be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics. Each student shall be required to follow the rules of the team, the policies of the Ambridge Area School District and the rules and regulations of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association in relation to their participation. The charter school will be assessed a fee for each of its students electing to participate in an Ambridge Area School District-sponsored interscholastic sport.

### **Procedures and Responsibilities**

1. The AASD Athletics Department will announce physical exam information and tryout/practice information through the local media.
2. Charter school students who wish to participate in interscholastic athletics should submit a completed PIAA physical exam card and related forms to the District's athletic trainer according to the announced timeline. They may contact the Athletic Office for information about orientation meetings, schedules, tryouts, practices, etc. for the upcoming season.
3. The Athletic Office will send an "Interscholastic Eligibility" memorandum and the packet to the charter school at the beginning of each sports season. This packet details AASD and PIAA academic and attendance requirements for interscholastic eligibility.
4. The charter school will notify the Athletic Office in a timely manner of any of its students participating in interscholastic athletics who do not meet eligibility standards.
5. Charter school students must arrange for their own transportation to and from practices and competitions at sites away from the charter school or home and to the departure site for any teams traveling to away competitions.

### **SAFETY IN YOUTH SPORTS ACT**

**Senate Bill No. 200**

**and**

### **SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST LAW FOR YOUTH ATHLETES**

**House Bill 1610**

The Governor of Pennsylvania signed into law two ACTS concerning the well-being of student-athletes, Senate Bill No. 200 and House Bill 1610. Both laws list specific requirements for anyone involved in interscholastic sports, club sports and intramural activities. A coach, intramural activity coordinator, supervisor or volunteer shall not coach an athletic activity until the coach completes the training course and provides proof to the Ambridge Area School District athletic department on a yearly basis.



## **SAFETY IN YOUTH SPORTS ACT, Senate Bill No. 200**

Establishes a standard for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries to student-athletes. Athletic activity is defined as interscholastic athletics, an athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by or associated with a school entity (intramurals), including cheerleading, club-sponsored sports activities and sports activities sponsored by school-affiliated organizations.

### **Requirements:**

A coach shall complete the concussion management certification-training course offered by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Federation of State High School Associations ([www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)) or another provider approved by the Department of Health.

A coach, intramural activity coordinator, supervisor or volunteer shall not coach an athletic activity until the coach completes the training course and provides proof to the Ambridge Area School District athletic department annually.

### **Penalties:**

- *First violation:* Suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season.
- *Second violation:* Suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for the next season.
- *Third violation:* Permanent suspension for coaching any athletic activity.

## **SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST LAW FOR YOUTH ATHLETES, House Bill 1610**

Like the concussion law, the newly approved measure requires that any student-athlete who exhibits symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest during an athletic activity be removed from play immediately. Furthermore, a student-athlete must be held out of all athletic activities if he or she exhibits any signs of cardiac arrest before or after an event.

Under this law, coaches must complete an annual training course about sudden cardiac arrest and cannot coach an athletic activity until they complete the training. The exact requirements will be posted on the State Department of Health's website. A coach, intramural activity coordinator, supervisor or volunteer shall not coach an athletic activity until the coach completes the training course and provides proof to the Ambridge Area School District athletic department.

## **PRE-SEASON PREPARATION**

### **Organizational Meeting**

Each head coach will conduct a pre-season organizational meeting. This meeting is to take place within the two weeks prior to or after the first practice date. The meeting is to serve as a time to inform student-athletes of the school district athletic philosophy, athletic department procedures and individual coaching rules that will govern them throughout the season. Additionally, coaches should schedule a meeting with parents once the season has begun to discuss with them the same items covered with the students. Coaches must discuss their criteria, objective and subjective, used to select the team. Overall procedures to be used in team selection are to be discussed at this time. Handouts will be prepared to inform students and parents of season expectations, rules against hazing, proper use of social media, practice schedules, training rules, awards criteria, and other general information. Communication with student-athletes and parents is extremely important. As a supplement, we ask coaches to consider the following:

In addition to holding meetings, have information available on the team website (linked to the athletics department webpage) which covers these points in a clear, concise manner. Positive outcomes of this information would be:

1. Written confirmation of what is covered verbally in your orientation to candidates.
2. A source of information for candidates who may miss the meeting because they don't get information through the morning announcements or have a conflict with the meeting time.
3. A reference for the Athletic Department staff to provide information to new or just questioning students and parents in order to direct them to a clear and definitive base of information.

#### **Suggested information to be included:**

- Identification of and introduction to the coaching staff, as well as coaches' contact information
- Philosophy of the program
- Pre-season conditioning/preparation opportunities available to students
- Details about official practice (times/locations)
- A list of the criteria to be used in any selection process that will be employed
- Academic and attendance expectations

*Coaches may use the standard procedure to have your information posted on the website.*

### **Document Approval**

Any documents distributed to parents or student-athletes relative to participation information, team rules, season preparation information, or any other school team information must be submitted to the athletic directors for approval prior to distribution.

If coaches distribute non-approved documents, when questioned by parents the athletic administration will not be able to support what has been distributed. Please submit documents in a timely manner for approval before distribution.

### **Pre-Participation Forms**

1. Students wishing to join an interscholastic athletics sport team for the first time in a school year must register online prior to the announced deadline through their student portal. In addition, parent and student signatures must be secured and an Authorized Medical Examiner (AME) must complete and sign Section 4 of the Comprehensive Initial [Pre-Participation Physical Exam \(CIPPE\)](#). Finally, the printed signed CIPPE must be submitted to the Athletic Office according to the schedules posted by the PIAA and the AASD Department of Athletics.
2. Any student who fulfills the requirements to participate in a PIAA interscholastic sport during a school year and seeks to participate in subsequent sport(s) in the same school year, must complete and submit to the AASD Athletic Office his/her PIAA Recertification by Parent/Guardian form (CIPPE, Section 5) according to the schedules posted by the PIAA and AASD Department of Athletics. If after review by AASD athletic training staff it is determined the student needs further medical evaluation, a ***"Re-evaluation and Recertification by Authorized Medical Examiner"*** form (Section 6, CIPPE) must be completed and submitted to the Athletic Office.
3. Finally, if the student-athlete is participating in wrestling, he/she must have established a minimum wrestling weight class utilizing the ***National Wrestling Coaches' Association (NWCA) Optimal Performance Calculator*** as the mechanism to calculate the minimum wrestling weight. The AASD certified assessor will perform all required testing and complete Section 7 of the CIPPE form.

### **Timeline for Submitting Pre-Participation Physical Examination**

Students who successfully participate in a physical examination performed by a private physician and who have resided in the AASD during the previous semester must submit a completed packet to the Athletic Trainer or Athletic Director. This should be done by 4:00 PM on the Monday one week before the first official tryout/practice date in order for the athlete to be eligible to begin tryouts/practice on that first official date.

Late completed private exam packets will be accepted by the Athletic Director from the Tuesday prior to the official start of tryout/practice until the official start day at 4:00 PM; however, due to processing time, a student-athlete submitting a packet during this extended time may not be eligible to tryout/practice until the Monday after the first official tryout/practice date. At no time will he/she be allowed to participate in any physical activity, drills, etc. until cleared by the Athletic Trainer.

A student new to the AASD during the semester may submit a completed packet to the Athletic Director upon arrival to the District. It may be accepted after consultation with the Coach of the particular sport desired. Considerations include the reasonable safety of the student-athlete, the opportunity to challenge for a position and the effect upon athletes already selected to the squad.

### **STUDENTS WITH IEP'S OR SECTION 504 AGREEMENTS (STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES) PARTICIPATING IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS**

The following points have been provided by the School District Solicitor and lay the foundation for dealing with this issue:

- Students with disabilities must meet the same essential eligibility requirements as non-disabled students in order to qualify for participation in an extracurricular activity.
- The District is under a legal obligation to make any “reasonable accommodations” to those essential eligibility requirements, which may be necessary in order to provide “equal opportunities” for the students with disabilities. Those reasonable accommodations should not “fundamentally alter the nature of an existing program” nor should they “boost the student’s natural levels of ability and result in a competitive advantage.”
- A balance must be struck between protecting the confidentiality of students with IEPs or Section 504 agreements and needing to inform District coaches of important information that pertains to students who are under their care, custody, and control.

Therefore, the following procedures will be followed in regard to this issue:

1. The AASD Special Education Office will send a list of those students with IEPs and Section 504 agreements by grade to the Athletic Office on August 1.
2. The Athletic Office will check the list of students submitting completed physical exam packets to the Athletic Trainer with the list from Special Ed. for the name of any student with disabilities wishing to participate on an interscholastic team.
3. The Athletic Office will inform individual interscholastic coaches of any student with disabilities wishing to try out for their team before the first practice day. A statement about the importance of confidentiality shall be issued with any information that is disseminated.
4. The coach of any such student-athlete will contact the identified grade level/building resource teacher for access to and help in understanding the IEP or Section 504 agreement for that student. Specifically to be discussed should

be the coach's role in relation to the documents and the means for fulfilling his/her duties and responsibilities.

## **SCHEDULES**

The Athletic Director schedules all interscholastic athletic contests in accordance with Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) rules and regulations. As a member of various leagues and conferences, the Ambridge Area School District's athletic program is obligated to schedule all conference/league teams. Coaches are permitted to make contacts to schedule games and scrimmages, but all final arrangements and contracts for those games and scrimmages are the responsibility of the Athletic Director.

## **MANAGEMENT DURING THE SEASON**

### **General Supervision of the Student-Athletes**

Concern regarding liability of school districts and those persons hired by school districts to coach and supervise students in extracurricular activities has increased the accountability of supervision. Coaches must know where their student-athletes are and what they are doing at all times. Rules of behavior are to be developed and presented to the student-athletes so there is no question of the coaches' expectations. These rules are to include, but not be limited to, pre and post practice activities, locker room and showers behavior, proper etiquette while traveling to and from activities, off campus training routines and appropriate behavior during competition.

Coaches must not isolate themselves from their teams prior to or following practice and game situations. Coaches are to remain with their student-athletes in the building or at the pickup/drop-off point until all have left the premises.

### **Coaches are not to give their keys/swipe cards to student-athletes at any time.**

Student managers may use coaches' keys during practice sessions, but managers are not to have their own keys. Lost keys/swipe cards must be reported to the athletic office immediately.

Specific rules for locker room behavior must be developed by the coach, distributed to the team members and should include prohibition of rough play, throwing of objects, and hazing, bullying or harassing of other players. In addition, student-athletes are to be reminded that spikes and cleats are not to be worn anywhere in any district building, including the locker room. Student-athletes must be reminded of their responsibility to turn off showers when finished and to respect the facility in general. The coach will be the last person to leave after practice and/or game.

School district policies regarding tobacco, drugs, and alcohol apply equally to coaches and student-athletes at all district sponsored activities. **Coaches are not to use tobacco products or to consume alcohol while supervising students.**

### **Squad Limits and Squad Selection**

The AASD has a “no cut” policy when it comes to squad limits; therefore, all students who try-out become part of the team. If a situation arises in which the school district deems it necessary to cut, the coaches, as the designated professionals in charge of these sports, will make student-athletes aware of the criteria for selection, maintain records of try-out evaluations, and provide sufficient opportunity to fairly evaluate and rank student-athletes.

Coaches of these sports will:

- A. Provide a written copy of the selection process including criteria for selection to each candidate.
- B. Maintain accurate records of observation and evaluation during each practice session.
- C. Provide sufficient evaluation opportunities for each student-athlete over the duration of the tryout session to fairly evaluate candidates.
- D. **Immediately after posting the results of try-outs**, give a copy of the written documents regarding the selection process and final evaluations of all prospects to the Athletic Director for file.

It is essential that students be given the opportunity to discuss with the coaching staff reasons why they have not been selected for the team through a face-to-face conversation. Coaches **will not post a list of names** of students who have not made the squad. Coaches **will not notify individuals by email** that they have not been selected.

If a list of students who have made the team is posted, it is to include a note encouraging those who have not made the team to discuss the reasons with the coach. Underclass students not selected for the team should be encouraged to try out for the team the next season.

Students not selected for a squad may be permitted to try-out for another sport during that season, provided the selection process for that team has not been completed and the head coach is agreeable to the tryout. Students not selected for a squad may join another sport team that has no sports limits no later than two days after notification of not being selected to the first squad.

When traveling to District, Regional and State tournaments, PIAA regulations regarding the maximum number of squad members to be admitted to a tournament site must be followed. In addition, student-athletes who are not in team uniform or who are not eligible to participate in play should not be included in the team travel party. No JV or

non-tournament team student-athletes may be transported or put under the supervision of the coaching staff for the duration of the tournament.

### **Team Roster**

Immediately following the selection of the team and the issuing of equipment, each head coach will prepare a roster and submit it to the athletic department. **When making the roster, coaches should use the template and formatting provided by the WPIAL for each sport.** The template for each sport can be found on the WPIAL website ([www.wpial.org](http://www.wpial.org)). These rosters will be distributed to the media and opponent schools to assist them in the coverage and reporting of our athletic teams.

### **Practice Sessions**

Practice sessions must be conducted much the same as teaching a class – the athletic venue is the coaches' classroom. Attendance is to be taken every day of practice (duty to supervise). Records kept must be accurate in terms of date and time. The "lesson plan" (Duty to plan) must contain as much detail as necessary to adequately explain the day's activities. Care is to be taken to outline warm-up activities, instruction periods, drill sessions, scrimmage times, water breaks, rest periods, and warm-down activities. Coaches are to avoid the use of terminology such as "suicides, back-breaker, etc." that may become a problem in the event of an injury or accident. In addition, the term "punishment" should never be used to reflect a consequence toward a student-athlete or as motivation. Except on occasion practice time is to be limited to two hours, excluding time required for dressing and showering. Student-athletes should never practice alone. **A coaching staff member must be the first to arrive and the last to leave.**

Coaches are to develop and distribute a tentative practice schedule. The schedule is to be distributed to the student-athletes at the pre-season meeting or the first practice session. Coaches must make the student-athletes aware that the schedule is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Saturday and holiday practices are to be limited to allow student-athletes time for family activities. Such practices should not exceed 2 ½ hours of time.

**By PIAA rule, no practices (or contests) may be scheduled for more than a total of six days in any calendar week.**

### **Holiday and Sunday Practices**

Practice and athletic contests during scheduled school closings such as winter or spring vacations are permitted with approval by the athletic administration prior to the practice or contest. Practices on Sundays are discouraged but are permitted only with approval from school district administration.

## **Practice Session Risk Management**

The designated team physician and/or athletic training staff have a primary responsibility in managing the risks associated with athletic activity. He/she is authorized to alter or stop any practice situation that they deem unsafe.

## **Lightning and Inclement Weather**

In the event of a severe weather alert or severe weather conditions during practice, coaches will either be advised by the athletic director or charged to make a decision themselves whether to continue practice and about the safety procedures to be followed. When severe weather alerts or conditions affect a contest situation, the AASD game site manager and/ PIAA or officials will make the decision as to whether or not to continue.

Coaches of outdoor sports need to be aware of temperature and humidity conditions during the pre-season practice times which may be dangerous to student-athletes engaged in strenuous activity. Under such conditions, special precautions must be observed. If not carefully watched the student-athlete may be susceptible to heat fatigue, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. It is advisable to alternate periods of exercise with periods of rest during hot weather. It is important to replace the water the body loses through perspiration with periodic and frequent water breaks. It is important for the coaches to observe their student-athletes for signs of lethargy, inattention, awkwardness, or unusual fatigue. Symptoms of salt and water depletion may include sluggishness. If any of these symptoms are observed, the activity should be stopped. These symptoms are most likely to occur when the temperature is above 80 degrees and the humidity is 70% or higher. Coaches concerned about weather conditions should consult the certified Athletic Trainer.

Lightning is the most consistent and significant weather hazard that may affect interscholastic athletics. Precautions should be taken in the event of serious weather conditions. Practices and activities should be stopped and you should seek shelter:

- **If you see lightning.** The ability to see lightning varies depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and obstructions such as trees, mountains, etc. In clear air, and especially at night, lightning can be seen from storms more than 10 miles away provided that obstructions don't limit the view of the thunderstorm.
- **If you hear thunder.** Thunder can usually be heard for a distance of about 10 miles provided that there is no background noise. Traffic, wind, and precipitation may limit the ability to hear thunder to less than 10 miles. If you hear thunder, though, it's a safe bet that the storm is within ten miles.
- **If the skies look threatening.** Thunderstorms can develop directly overhead, and some storms may develop lightning just as they move into an area.



It is important to wait at least **30 minutes** after the last thunder or lightning before resuming practice. When in doubt, wait it out and check with the athletic trainers.

### **Locker Room Supervision**

Student-athletes **MUST** be supervised at all times. This includes locker room facilities and lobby areas where student-athletes wait for the late bus as well as practice and competition areas. **All coaches are responsible for supervision.** Coaches should make themselves visible in all areas as much as possible. Coaches should be last to leave the facility after a practice or competition.

### **Equipment And Supplies**

All equipment and supplies purchased by the Ambridge Area School District is the property of the district and coaches are accountable for the equipment used in their sport. Players are to be instructed in the proper care and maintenance of their equipment at the time of issue. The head coaches and their assistant(s) must have the knowledge of properly fitting equipment. Periodic inspection should be made of equipment to identify items that are unsafe, worn out, or defective. Equipment identified as unsafe or defective should be deactivated immediately.

Athletic department-issued equipment is to be used only for practice or contests that are part of the regularly scheduled season activities. The only exception would be for the wearing of game jerseys on a game day, during a spirit day, or at a pep assembly. **No part of a uniform is to be worn during participation in a physical education class.** Accurate inventories must be maintained as well as records indicating to whom the equipment has been issued. Athletes are to be held accountable for the equipment issued to them. For liability reasons, athletic department equipment will not be loaned to outside groups or organizations.

### **Procedures for Excuse From Class and School**

On the established dismissal form (available in the Athletic Office and included in head coaches' pre-season folder), each coach will prepare an approved list of squad members, their grade and dismissal times for each athletic event. Coaches will be responsible for informing faculty and attendance secretaries of additions and deletions to this information due to postponement/cancellation. **Dismissal times for athletic events should be established to keep student-athletes in class as long as possible yet allow for safe travel to and adequate time for preparation at the event site.** Students should contact teachers in advance of their absences to obtain assignments for the class periods they will be missing.

### **Music for Pre-Game Warm-Ups**

If a team wishes to play "warm-up" music in the venue during their pre-game routine, it must secure authorization prior to the event from the Athletic Director. Student-athletes from a team (or the team's booster club) must present for review a legible, printed copy

of each song's lyrics along with a copy of the entire tape at least one week before the date of intended use. Lyrics that contain sexually suggestive messages, references to drugs and alcohol or profanity will not be authorized.

### **Postponing Events**

If the playing of a home event is in question due to weather conditions or any other factor not conducive to safe and fair conditions, the Athletic Director will, when possible, confer with the Head Coach in order to make the decision whether or not to postpone the event. The AASD will adhere to the prescribed WPIAL protocols when it comes to postponing and rescheduling events.

### **Transportation Responsibilities**

- Requests for transportation are to be submitted to the athletic director. The athletic office will authorize and send communications with the contracted carrier.
- Coaches are responsible for the accountability of all people travelling with the team. Travel rosters are to be prepared, and attendance taken prior to departure to and from the scheduled destination. Attendance must be retaken if the trip is interrupted for rest stops or lunch or dinner breaks.
- Prior to any bus leaving the AASD on an interscholastic athletic trip, the Coach must present the bus driver an exact list of the names of all sport team students and coaches who are traveling in the group for that trip.
- Respect for vehicles and equipment is expected at all times. Sports equipment and travel gear is to be loaded so the vehicles are not damaged in any way. Student-athletes are to be properly seated at all times, and must not in any way distract the driver. All team members are to be instructed not to wear spikes or cleats on the bus. Food and drink on the bus is to be handled so there are no spills or debris remaining when the trip has concluded. Plastic garbage bags are to be taken on all trips, and the bus is to be inspected following the return home to ensure cleanliness.
- Athletic sites within the Ambridge area that are deemed "HOME" competition/practice venues will be viewed as such for purposes of transportation. The following protocols will be in effect:
  - When an event is scheduled during or immediately after school hours, coaches should supervise travel to the event via scheduled AASD transportation or walking. Only in special circumstances if the event is scheduled to occur at a time separated from typical school hours, student-athletes may be asked to provide their own transportation to the site without the supervision of the coaching staff.
  - Travel away from the event will be at the discretion of the coach. Student-athletes may travel back to the school campus via school-provided means or may travel via their own means without supervision but are not to transport any other students besides themselves.
  - Travel to team activities, i.e.: team building, bonding etc., will follow the same protocols.

All student-athletes must travel to away competitions via the transportation provided by the School District. No student-athlete may drive, or travel with another person, to or from an away athletic event. Exceptions to this procedure would be extended for a student-athlete, when circumstances warrant, with advance notice, and transportation would be provided by the parent or guardian only. Student-athletes may ride home with an approved adult if a parent/guardian sends an email to the athletic director at least 24 hours in advance. Student-athletes who miss the bus and arrive later at a contest are not permitted to participate unless they have received prior approval from the coach or athletic director.

### **Van Driver Procedures**

Staff members arriving at the Transportation Office to pick up a vehicle for a school-sponsored field trip must show the following forms of identification:

- Valid PA Driver's License
- School District ID

Coaches are cautioned that transporting student-athletes in any vehicle (personal or another's) other than one provided by the AASD during the course of an official team activity is prohibited except in an emergency situation.

School District employees who are driving district-owned vans must have copies of their drivers' license and personal insurance cards on file with the Business Office. School district employees are the only persons authorized to drive the vans.

Because vans are usually picked up during the morning or afternoon bus runs, staff members should arrive an extra 10 minutes early during these times to allow for processing of paperwork.

### **ASSIGNMENT OF VEHICLES TO INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC EVENTS**

It is the objective of the Ambridge Area School District to provide safe, secure and reliable modes of transportation for all interscholastic athletics teams in a fiscally responsible manner.

The mode of transportation for all regular-season and post-season away contests will be assigned according to consistent standards as follows:

1. All varsity, junior varsity, and middle school teams will travel via yellow school bus to all away contests.
2. All teams numbering 9 or fewer students with one adult supervisor or multiples of such will travel via van, if one is available.
3. Out-of-season travel will be determined by the coach, athletic department, and transportation department.

## **OVERNIGHT TRIPS**

### **REQUIRED APPROVALS**

- **Within Pennsylvania, Not Involving an Overnight Stay** – Student trips within the borders of Pennsylvania that do not include an overnight stay do not require the formal approval of the School Board. This includes academic/athletic competitions. They require only the approval of the Building Administrator or designee. Individual student trip approvals are not required for regularly occurring, scheduled events such as athletic competitions.
- **Within Pennsylvania, Involving an Overnight Stay** – Student trips within the geographical borders of Pennsylvania involving an overnight stay must be pre-approved by the School Board. All academic and athletic competitions involving an overnight stay shall be pre-approved by the School Board.
- **Out of State Student Trips** – Student trips beyond the geographical borders of Pennsylvania, whether or not they involve an overnight stay, must be pre-approved by the School Board. This does not include academic or athletic competitions. All academic or athletic competitions beyond the geographical borders of Pennsylvania must be pre-approved by the School Board.

### **APPROVAL REQUESTS**

- **Timing** –Written approval requests that require Principal, Superintendent, and/or School Board approval should be received from student trip sponsors within 30 days prior to the planned trip.
- **Approval Requirement** – Properly endorsed approvals and action by the School Board, pursuant to “required approvals” must occur before a student trip is recognized as approved. No unapproved student trips will be tolerated.

### **LODGING GUIDELINES**

- It is the expectation that students (of the same sex/gender) will lodge 4 students / double room
- Coaches (of the same sex/gender) will lodge 2 adults / double room
- If individual students or coaches wish to have other accommodations, any extra charges will be assumed by the coach, family, or the booster club.

In some circumstances (State championship competition), overnight travel to sporting events may be warranted. In that case, all school district/athletics department/team policies, procedures, rules and regulations are in effect. In addition, each student-athlete has the responsibility for making the trip a positive and enjoyable experience for all. Violations of these standards will result in disciplinary action according to the appropriate Student Handbook, Athletics Department Handbook and Team Rules and Regulations.

Instances of rules infractions or other problems while on a trip must be reported to the Athletic Director, Principal, Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent immediately. Begin with the Athletic Director and if needed, work up the chain of command until you make direct contact; a message left on an answering machine or voice mail does not constitute direct contact.

Hotel stays are to be pre-arranged so families will know the location in case of emergency or in the event they wish to stay at the same facility. Arrangements may be made through the athletic office, and a voucher and payment request form prepared to allow a check to be drawn for payment upon check-out.

When registering, introduce yourself to the management and ask them to report to the coaching staff any problems that occur with the student-athletes. Make certain individuals in the group understand what's expected of them and that they abide by those rules. Check all rooms prior to occupancy for damage, and just prior to check-out to be sure rooms are left in acceptable condition. Make one final check with management to see if there were any problems with your student-athletes. Express your appreciation to the management for their cooperation.

**Direct supervision** is extremely important when students are on overnight activities. Coaches must be visible and accessible to the student-athletes at all times. Careful screening of roommates, host families etc. should be completed prior to the trip. Information--including the address and phone contact-- must be shared with parents/guardians prior to the start of the trip.

### **PRACTICE AND COMPETITION ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

All coaches are expected to administer their team according to the following general department guidelines while also establishing sport specific rules & regulations regarding attendance. Any sport team-specific attendance rules should complement but not conflict with or undermine those general department ones listed.

An Ambridge Area School District student-athlete must regard his/her attendance at all AASD practices and competitions as a very high priority. Two important reasons support this expectation:

First, given that competition is extremely keen among AASD students to achieve a starting role on one of our school district's sports teams, it is expected that students who are successful in gaining these opportunities utilize their participation to its fullest capacity. Missing practice or competition may hinder a student-athlete's individual skill, attitude and knowledge development; weaken his or her role with the team; and affect the team's performance and chances for success.

Secondly, PIAA By-Laws base a student-athlete's eligibility for championship contests upon attendance at his or her school's practices and competitions:

Article IX, Section 5 - A student who participates as an individual or as a member of a team in a sport in an athletic program other than that of the student's school, who is enrolled at a school having a team in that sport, shall be ineligible to participate in the District or Inter-District Championship Contests in that sport unless the student has been in uniform and available to participate as a member of the student's school team in that sport for at least 75% of the contests occurring within the period of time beginning with that teams first regular season contest and ending with its last regular season contest. Where the failure to meet 75% requirement results, in part, from reasons other than participation on the non-school team, the principal may waive such absences, provided that the student was otherwise in uniform and available to participate in at least 50% of the total number of the teams regular season contests.

With regard to practices for the period of time beginning with the team's first contest and ending with its last contest of the regular season, the principal of each school shall determine whether practice in the athletic program other than that of the student's school meets the practice requirements of that school. If it does not, the student shall be ineligible to participate in the District or Inter-District Championship contest in that sport.

A student-athlete's absence from an AASD practice or competition, therefore, will be excused only for the following three reasons:

1. Circumstances generally approved by the AASD for absence from school (illness/injury, religious observance, educational trip, co-curricular field trip, special academic pursuit, family commitment, or doctor's appointment). Student-athletes should always communicate an upcoming absence as far in advance as possible to the head coach.

Because of the broad scope of District activities, conflicts may occur between athletic and non-athletic AASD sponsored activities. Conflict between an athletic event and another AASD-sponsored activity should involve cooperation among all interested parties to work out a solution that will be in the best interest of the student-athlete. The resolution should be based on these criteria:

- The relative importance of each event
- The importance of each event to the student
- The contribution the student can make to each activity
- When the events were scheduled
- Discussion among the coach, student-athlete and parent

Once the decision has been made, the student will not be penalized by the coach or sponsor of the event not chosen; however, playing time or starting restrictions may be imposed upon the individual by the coach as appropriate to the situation with regard to team growth and individual performance.

2. Missing any beginning-of-the-season try-out or practice sessions because of family vacation when the athlete provides written notice of his/her plans to the head coach at least two weeks prior to the first day of official practice/try-out. In

addition, if it is determined that cuts must be made, the athlete must be in attendance for his/her try-out session(s).

3. Participation in practice during the season of the same sport in an athletic program other than that of the student's school program when these two conditions have been met:
  - The Principal, with the agreement of the head coach, waives the requirement of Article IX, Section 5 because the student's failure to meet the 75% requirement results from illness, injury or the student's failure to meet another PIAA eligibility rule.
  - The Principal, with the agreement of the head coach, determines that practice in the athletic program other than that of the student's school meets the practice requirement of the school.

Failure to follow these rules, or any additional team-specific rules publicized by the coach, will result in consequences being charged to the student-athlete. Action may include, but is not limited to, suspension from team activities or dismissal from the squad.

It is intended that compliance with these attendance requirements will help each student-athlete to develop his/her own talents and will contribute to the development of a strong interscholastic athletics program.

**Coaches must be diligent in determining daily eligibility.** The AASD four-period attendance rule is a deeply-rooted part of the student-athlete's life as well as a responsibility of the teaching, administrative and coaching staff. We all know the rule: "A student-athlete must be in attendance for four periods in order to participate in a practice or competition that day. Exemptions are provided for properly approved absences by students - religious observances, medical appointments, field trips, etc. However, those absences are properly approved only when notification is given to the attendance secretary in the main office PRIOR to the student being out of the building." In order for a system to work fairly and consistently, we all must work together to manage and enforce it. Here are the details of the system:

- Student-athletes must be made aware of the rule. Coaches need to reinforce the rule periodically.
- Coaches with access to the District's attendance program should check their sport teams' daily "attendance irregularities" listing. An Athletic Department secretary can print a list for coaches if they do not have access or can instruct you on how to print the report.
- Coaches should contact each student-athlete listed on the attendance irregularity list **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to examine the reason for their being listed. Do not wait until the bus is loading; those are often hectic times in the school and supporting information from staff is difficult or impossible to gather.

- If the coach resolves the discrepancy to his/her satisfaction, the student-athlete participates. If the coach is unsure of the validity of either the listing or the student's excuse, he/she should contact the athletics director for assistance. Err in the favor of the student. Bus departures are also hectic times in the athletic office – do not wait to deal with the matter until that time. The Department secretaries are not responsible for making decisions about a student's eligibility; they can provide information only to help a coach make the decision.
- If an error is committed by a coach or the athletic director in allowing participation, the student will receive the consequences for that attendance irregularity for the next similar event (practice or competition).
- The effective operation of this system is predicated on having accurate information from teachers available through technology that performs consistently. Sometimes those goals are not achieved. Coaches should be prepared to use common sense and patience when enforcing the rule

### **Special Events**

Throughout the course of the season, certain non-athletic events will occur that require some thought and planning. Events such as Homecoming and Senior Recognition Night, to name a few, add something special to the season but are generally thought of as “added attractions”. For these events to be successful and enjoyable the coach must work in conjunction with other faculty members, cheerleading advisors, parents, booster groups, custodians and administration. In addition, the normal game routine may be disrupted by extending half time, prolonging the intermission between games or delaying the start of a game or meet. Although coaches are encouraged to be well prepared for contests and work within an established time schedule, your flexibility and cooperation is requested and appreciated.

### **School Cancellations/ Delayed Starts/ Early Dismissals**

In the event school is canceled or is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all contests, practices and “open” activities are to be canceled.

Because of a sometimes-rapid change in weather conditions and exceptional circumstances relating to a team, the above-stated procedure may be amended through selective administrative action.

Relative to outside groups and cancellations, the following guidelines are in place:

1. All outside organizations using Ambridge Area School District facilities will identify an appropriate contact(s) and supply current phone numbers.
2. Any day when the Ambridge Area School District cancels classes or dismisses early, all evening activities by outside organizations are canceled. It is the responsibility of organizations to monitor district announcements and inform their participants accordingly.
3. If the Ambridge Area School District closes its facilities to outside organizations on a weekend or holiday, this announcement will be made on the district website at



[www.ambridge.k12.pa.us](http://www.ambridge.k12.pa.us). It is the responsibility of organizations to monitor the website and inform the participants accordingly.

4. If an organization chooses to cancel an event due to inclement weather when the district has not closed its facilities, it is the responsibility of the organization to notify the appropriate district personnel.

## **INCIDENT REPORTING**

### **A. Incident occurring on AASD site or and during a AASD School-sponsored event or activity**

When an incident occurs, the coach must follow this sequence:

1. Preserve all evidence
2. Personally contact any of the following school district staff (voice mail is not acceptable) Athletic Administrator - Building Administrator - Assistant Superintendent - Superintendent
3. Discuss with the administrator actions to be taken next which adhere to department, district and public law.

### **B. Report of Incident Occurring Off AASD Site or In the Off Season**

When a report about an incident comes to the coach's knowledge, he/she must follow this sequence:

1. Confirm that the rules of due process will be followed (Same as Section A).
2. Acknowledge that any personal response will not supersede AASD policy or public law.
3. Personally contact an Athletic Administrator to discuss any actions which may be taken.

**\*Records must be maintained throughout the season. Such records include attendance, practice times, and evaluation forms.**

## **POSTSEASON DUTIES**

1. Complete evaluations for all of your paid assistants. Bring the signed evaluations to your end-of-season meeting with the athletic director.
2. Submit a typed-written report of your season. Your report should include your W-L record, the scores of each contest (JV and Varsity).
3. List of letter winners. The letter winner requirements for each sport and the form to submit letter winners will be provided. Do not vary from the objective criteria for winning a letter. This will save you a lot of headaches. Moreover, it's important that the value of a letter doesn't change over time or with a coaching change.

Email the athletic director your letter winners prior to your meeting. The athletic director will give you the letters and awards when you meet.

4. School records broken (if any).
5. Statement from you that all equipment has been collected and list of any players who informed you that they lost a piece of equipment. In other words, a player has either handed in their equipment or they have told you they lost it. To be clear, all equipment should be collected prior to scheduling your end-of-season meeting with me. Do not come to the meeting and say that you are still waiting for this person to turn in their equipment.
6. Complete inventory of equipment. You must use the template provided to you for inventory. Email the athletic director your completed inventory prior to your meeting.
7. List of 3-5 team goals for next year.
8. Turn in keys (if any). This does not include your swipe card.
9. Date/time/location of banquet.
10. Schedule meeting with Athletic Director.

Please do not schedule your meeting with the athletic director until you have completed all of your end-of-season responsibilities. Keep in mind, neither you nor your assistants can be paid until your end-of-season responsibilities are fulfilled and you meet with the athletic director to complete your evaluation.

### **Banquets**

Coaches making a presentation at banquets given by booster clubs are to keep in mind the following guidelines when preparing their comments:

1. Express gratitude to those who helped with the season. Caution should be taken not to forget someone.
2. Keep comments about the season brief and positive.
3. Make sure every player is introduced by name. Comments about individuals should be brief and positive if comments are used.
4. Keep most comments for seniors.
5. Avoid predictions about next year's team.
6. Do not talk about previous teams.
7. Do not use anecdotes that are not appropriate for a formal awards banquet.
8. Do not make negative comments about other schools.
9. Do not allow "open mic" comments by all players; this should be reserved to seniors, captains, or selected players if at all.
10. Players making comments should be instructed to be brief, positive and respectful.

## **COACH/STUDENT-ATHLETE /PARENT RELATIONSHIPS**

An effective working relationship among the "athletic triangle" of coach, student-athlete and parent benefits the quality of each experience with the athletic endeavor and contributes significantly to the success of the entire team. Establishing this relationship requires that each of the three parties understands his/her role in the process and communicates openly and honestly with the other persons.

To open the communication channels the coaching staff is responsible for conducting a pre-season orientation meeting at which time they will cover topics such as the following:

- Introductions and related background experiences of the coaching staff and program support staff.
- General plans/goals for the upcoming season.
- PIAA, district, school, department and team philosophies, procedures, rules and expectations as covered in the Athlete's Handbook and team handouts.
- Locations and times of practices and competitions.
- Helpful tips on how parents can best support their child during the season.
- How to best reach the coach by phone or email and a confirmation of how to best reach each parent
- When sending a "mass" email, utilize 'BCC to protect the privacy of others

Student-athletes and their parents are responsible for asking questions to clarify understanding of the topics discussed at the meeting or introduced in any other printed material; confirming address, phone and email information; and for informing the coaches of any expected conflicts in the schedule.

With this foundation in place, it is anticipated that two-way or three-way communication between any of the parties can easily and respectfully be conducted throughout the season about a variety of topics. However, the most critical time for the working relationship to be employed is when a concern or conflict arises about an expectation or a previous understanding. Topics accepted as appropriate for discussion are the following:

- The student-athlete's academic performance.
- The student-athlete's behavior in school, with the team or in the general public as it pertains to the team's reputation.
- The student-athlete's role on the team.
- The application of PIAA, district, department and team philosophies, procedures, rules and expectations to a student-athlete.
- Suggestions to improve a student-athlete's acquiring of skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to the sport.
- Information about recruiting and recommendations about a student-athlete's suitability for play at different collegiate levels.
- Management of injuries incurred by the student-athlete.

There are also topics which are NOT appropriate for discussion. These include certain prerogatives for which the coach alone has jurisdiction within the bounds of school district philosophies, regulations and policies:

- Other players' roles on the team
- Selection, placement and determination of playing time of personnel.
- Establishment and enforcement for all guidelines and training rules related to the activity.
- Appointment of practice times, dates and procedures.
- Preparation and execution of all travel arrangements for the team.
- Creation and enactment of competition strategies.
- Management of all awards.

In a time of question or conflict concerning an appropriate topic, the following procedures are to be followed in attempting to reach a resolution to the problem:

- Avoid telephone and email discussions if possible. Speak face-to-face with the other individual(s) so that the most complete communication takes place.
- The first level of contact should always be between the student-athlete and coach at a time other than during an actual practice or competition. Speaking privately in the coach's office or in a place away from other team members is preferred.
- If the problem is not resolved at this primary level meeting, a conference among the coach, student-athlete and parent is in order. However, never attempt to confront a person immediately before or after a practice or contest to discuss the matter; always call or email to set up an appointment. If a coach cannot be reached in this manner, contact the athletic office for assistance in reaching him/her.

If a resolution still is not gained after this conference, contact the athletic director for his/her input as to how to proceed. He/she will give due process and consideration to all of the involved parties while attempting to bring the matter to a reasonable conclusion.

### **BOOSTER CLUBS**

The Ambridge Area School District recognizes and approves of Booster Clubs. These clubs offer a positive opportunity for parents to be involved with the athletic program. Booster clubs are to work in conjunction with, and be supportive of, the coaching staff and the student-athletes. They have no authority or control over any aspect of the athletic program.

Items in which Booster Clubs can support include: end-of-season banquets; Senior gifts; in-season meals; team spirit packs (items players will keep). Items in which the school will support include: team uniforms; equipment/supplies; transportation; contest

officials; coaches' salaries; dues and fees. Any equipment or services purchased by the booster club will become the property of the school district.

The school district may seek financial assistance from Booster Clubs with various items. The athletic program is a school district program and therefore is guided and directed by all laws, rules, guidelines and policies that all programs in the school district must follow. Booster Clubs or any "outside" resource coming 'into' the school district athletic program must be carefully guided in order to abide by the laws, rules, guidelines and policies governing public school systems.

The head coach is responsible for communicating with and working in conjunction with the program booster club. The head coach, or representative, is encouraged to attend booster meetings. The coaching staff must be familiar with the district policy regarding Gifts to the District to assist the booster club in making decisions regarding the use of funds generated by fundraising projects. Coaches are encouraged to work with booster clubs in a cooperative way.

Any booster-club generated funds that are to be transferred to a coach at any level (Head Coach, assistant, volunteer, etc.) must be transferred through one transaction between the booster club and the recipient. Reimbursements from booster clubs to individuals to cover gifts or payments are not permissible.

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

### **Suspension From a Team**

Suspensions from a team may be made by the Coach of the sport, Athletic Director, or Building Administrator. The Coach, Athletic Director and/or the Administrator will confer with each other before action is taken. Causes for suspension include violations of team, department, school or District rules and policies.

If a student-athlete is under review / investigation for dismissal from a team, the Coach, Athletic Director, or Administrator may invoke a suspension until the review / investigation is complete. (If a student-athlete is under consideration for suspension from a team, he/she has the right to due process as explained in this document below.)

### **Dismissal From a Team**

Removal of a student-athlete from a team may be made by the Coach of the sport, Athletic Director, or Building Administrator for severe or repeated violations of team, department, school or District rules and policies. The Coach, Athletic Director and/or the Administrator will confer with each other before action is taken.

If a student-athlete (is under consideration for dismissal from a team,) he/she has the right to due process as explained in this document.

Any student-athlete dismissed from a team will not be permitted to participate on another team during that sport's season.

### **Due Process**

The following procedure has been developed by the Athletic Department to provide due process in the event a student is (under consideration) to be suspended or dismissed from a team:

The Coach, Athletic Director or Administrator will notify the student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent/guardian of the possibility of a suspension/dismissal, its proposed date/time of effect, and the infraction detected that prompts the considered consequence. This notification may take place in person or by phone call. The student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian will then be afforded the opportunity to reply to the charge and present evidence. If requested, such a conference will be held immediately or as soon as possible to be mutually agreed upon by the school district official and the student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian.

Nothing contained in this section denies a student or parent/guardian of his/her right to then appeal to the AASD superintendent, school board, or the courts or to be represented by counsel at any stage of the process.

### **ALUMNI PRACTICING WITH CURRENT DISTRICT STUDENT-ATHLETES**

Alumni and students withdrawn from high school are **NOT** permitted to participate in practices, inter-school practices, scrimmages, and/or contests. However, in sports other than wrestling and football, alumni are permitted to compete against a high school team in a clearly defined alumni contest, but this will count towards the team's maximum number of competitions. If former students wish to work with the high school team in the capacity of coach, then the procedures for volunteer coaches will apply.

**\*REFER to ARTICLE XII in the PIAA By-Laws at [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org).**

### **School Behavior and Citizenship**

Student-athletes are expected to conform to the general code of behavior for the building they attend. Violations of that code that result in in-school or out-of-school suspensions will affect a student-athlete's participation. When a student has been suspended out-of-school, the student may not visit any District campus during the duration of the suspension, nor may the student participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletic practices or competitions. Students may resume participation in extracurricular activities on the next calendar day following the conclusion of the out-of-school suspension. When a student is suspended in-school, participation in extracurricular activities will also be restricted. Students may resume participation on the next calendar day following the completion of the in-school

suspension. A coach may set a more restrictive rule if missing practice influences preparation for participation in competition.

### **Sportsmanship**

As a PIAA member school, we are committed to the goal that sportsmanship be recognized as an important part of interscholastic athletics. Sportsmanship is generally defined as the overt display of respect for the rules of the sport as well as for all players, coaches, officials and spectators in attendance. AASD student-athletes, when part of any team activity, are expected to behave in a way demonstrating fair play, ethics and integrity. Any actions or comments which are intended to taunt, bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others in the athletic arena are not acceptable. Student-athletes exhibiting such behavior will be addressed by the coach and may be disciplined accordingly, including reduction in playing time, suspension or dismissal from the team.

### **Hazing**

Hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any sports team recognized by the Board of School Directors. Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates. The AASD does not condone any form of initiation, known as hazing, as part of any school sponsored interscholastic sports team activity, and has adopted policy prohibiting involvement of students, volunteers and employees in hazing activities. No student-athlete, coach, volunteer or district employee shall plan, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.

### **Implications for High School Athletic Personnel**

The athletic personnel have the responsibility to research and understand the anti-hazing laws that his or her state has enacted and to determine whether the Board of Education, state association or National Association of Independent Schools has adopted any policy on hazing or sexual harassment. Coaches' handbooks, student and athletic handbooks, and codes of conduct for student-athletes should reflect these policies and implement strict prohibitions and consequences for participating in any hazing activities. Furthermore, the issue of hazing should be addressed in parent meetings and included in warning and prohibition statements that are signed by parents and student-athletes to ensure understanding.

### **Other Proactive Measures**

Anti-hazing experts suggest common sense to keep it out of schools through various educational efforts. In addition, student victims of hazing indicate that implementation

and enforcement of rigorous deterrent penalties is necessary. A combination of both initiatives will help reduce the potential for litigation in hazing incidents.

#### *Proactive Suggestions:*

- 1) Be proactive with policy prohibitions and development of reporting systems and mandates.
- 2) Develop an anti-hazing policy. Define hazing and identify behaviors that are unacceptable. Communicate the policy to students, parents and administrators.
- 3) Educate and inform your coaches. Heighten the awareness of their responsibility in prohibiting, preventing and intervening incidents of hazing on their teams.
- 4) Assign adult supervision to those situations and locations where hazing frequently occurs. This includes the locker rooms, back of the bus, during preseason camps and overnight trips.
- 5) Survey alumni and graduates to see if hazing rituals were experienced when they were students. Graduates are generally less inhibited than currently enrolled students.
- 6) Be attentive to details and current practices of teams that suggest a hierarchy where underclass players are subservient.
- 7) React immediately, firmly and consistently to incidents of hazing, regardless of the team status or skill level of the violator(s).

#### **Alternative Activities as a Preventative Measure**

Other studies on high school hazing recommend similar or additional steps to prevent hazing:

- 1) Organize community opportunities to discuss hazing. Discuss it with students in classrooms, sports, bands, choirs and other groups, activities or clubs.
- 2) Provide information about the dangers of hazing that contribute to the loss of civility and potential injury or loss of life.
- 3) Make student behavior a part of the coach's or group leader's evaluation.
- 4) Develop a contract for students and parents to sign regarding the anti-hazing policy and a requirement to report any hazing incident to the proper authority.
- 5) Require students to adhere to a code of conduct that prohibits hazing and other misconduct while maintaining academic standards as prerequisites to participation in extracurricular groups.
- 6) Identify, simplify and mandate reporting of hazing and harassment activities by any person who has knowledge of or who experiences these activities.
- 7) Establish a record of taking strong disciplinary action in cases of hazing.
- 8) Immediately notify families and law enforcement of any suspected hazing incidents.

#### **Summary**

Hazing has long been tolerated as a "necessary evil" and a community norm among high school athletics teams. As a result of recent serious injuries and deaths, this form



of demeaning and dangerous abuse of power has been largely rejected as incompatible with human rights and educationally sound practices.

Moreover, traditional justifications and defenses are no longer valid in light of contemporary legislation and litigation. In this regard, a majority of state legislatures have enacted prohibitions against these practices and litigation has been successfully initiated in civil, state and federal courts.

**Simply stated, hazing cannot and will not be tolerated in the Ambridge Area School District athletic program.**

**Websites:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <a href="http://www.hazing.hanknuwer.com">www.hazing.hanknuwer.com</a> | 6. <a href="http://www.ncaa.org">www.ncaa.org</a>   |
| 2. <a href="http://www.stophazing.org">www.stophazing.org</a>             | 7. <a href="http://www.nfhs.org">www.nfhs.org</a>   |
| 3. <a href="http://www.hazingstudy.org">www.hazingstudy.org</a>           | 8. <a href="http://www.niaaa.org">www.niaaa.org</a>   |
| 4. <a href="http://www.hazing.fsu.edu">www.hazing.fsu.edu</a>             | 9. <a href="http://www.hazing.cornell.edu/issues/resources.html">www.hazing.cornell.edu/issues/resources.html</a> |
| 5. <a href="http://www.hazingprevention.org">www.hazingprevention.org</a> |   |

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The AASD will not tolerate any behavior by administrators, faculty, staff or students which constitutes sexual harassment of a student. In addition, it is the responsibility of all administrators and supervisory personnel, faculty, staff, and students to report any conduct that is perceived to be sexual harassment. This policy is in compliance with provisions of Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting sex discrimination. Sexual harassment lowers morale and is damaging to the work environment; it is also illegal. This policy is in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations published as 29 CFR Sec. 1604, and guidelines adopted by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

The policy sets guidelines for procedures for dealing with situations involving possible sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome sexual requests, or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when the conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with one's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or learning environment.

**BUDGET RESPONSIBILITIES**

The head coach of each sport is responsible for the accurate and timely presentation of a budget for his/her sport. Because the Department of Education requires school districts to submit their budgets for the next school year by the end of December of the current school year, coaches will be asked to calculate and estimate their equipment and supply needs by November of the current school year for the following school year. This process is based on a zero-based budgeting format.

Coaches will need to submit their estimated equipment needs by November for the following school year in order for the athletic administration to process and develop the athletic budget for the following year.

It is important in budget preparation to be accurate in every detail to ensure the equipment requested is the equipment received. Detail regarding manufacturer, model number, amount, sizes, numbering and other specifications will insure delivery of equipment ordered.

In addition, not all equipment may be purchased that is requisitioned. Several factors dictate the ability to purchase all requisitioned items. Coaches should submit all anticipated needs but may be asked to prioritize if necessary.

Management of the budget is the joint responsibility of the coach and the athletic director. Coaches' record-keeping must be accurate. **Coaches MAY NOT purchase items on their own.** All equipment and supply orders must go through the athletic director and the Purchase Order process.

In addition, no staff member will be reimbursed for expenditures spent out of pocket. You may not use a personal credit card or your own cash and expect reimbursement from the school district.

### **CAMPS/CLINICS**

Coaches may serve as staff members for camps and clinics attended by their student-athletes or potential student-athletes for which fees are charged and for which the coaches receive remuneration for their efforts. However, coaches are responsible to make clear public communication to student-athletes and their parents stating that attendance in any such camp or clinic will not guarantee a student-athlete any privilege in regard to their relationship with the coach's AASD sports team. Fee based camps or training cannot occur by a AASD coach or volunteer coach during the sports season.

### **COLLEGE RECRUITING**

Coaches are to provide assistance to student-athletes in their sport who have indicated a desire to participate in athletics at a postsecondary institution. All students deserve the best guidance possible in making college and/or career plans. The student-athlete belongs to a special population because the assistance he/she needs must be provided by coaches, counselors, prospective college coaches, and parents.

## **CUSTODIANS AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL**

Custodians and maintenance personnel perform a vital service to athletics. Well-maintained playing and practice facilities do not happen by accident. These people deserve our gratitude and respect. Try to accommodate their needs as much as possible.

## **FACILITY MANAGEMENT**

Prior to the start of the season, and each day thereafter, inspect the facilities to be used by your team. Note any conditions in need of repair and report them to the athletic office. Requests for routine preparations for facilities specific to your sport are to be made to the athletic director. During the season, periodic inspections of facilities are to be made and any problems reported immediately. Requests for maintenance are to be made in writing. Coaches are responsible to assist the custodial staff in maintaining building security. Doors are to be checked and locked and lights should be turned out if you are the last to be in the building. Student-athletes must be instructed to carry all books and clothing to the locker rooms after school, so return trips to the academic wing are not necessary following practice. Team members are never to wear cleated shoes in the building.

## **INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR**

Among the fundamental skills of coaching is the process of influencing a student-athlete's behavior. While this is a complex process, it is generally agreed that reward, extinction (ignoring the behavior) or punishment are techniques that a coach may use to influence a student-athlete's behavior. Depending upon the circumstance, all may be effective tools for the coach to employ.

**However, the practice of a coach assigning physical activity (running laps, doing push ups, etc.) as 'punishment' or as a consequence for misbehavior or poor performance is not supported by the District.** While such a strategy may still be found in some areas of athletics, it seems counterproductive to the objectives of a sound interscholastic athletic program. Assigning such activity as a consequence may cause student-athletes to resent physical activity, something we want them to learn to enjoy throughout their lives. Instead of assigning physical activity as a consequence, it is recommended that other techniques be used to influence a student-athlete's behavior. Time outs, suspensions and calls to parents/guardians are possible strategies that are recommended.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

As employees of the school district, coaches are considered mandated reporters relative to child abuse. A report must be made when there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, it is not necessary for the reporter to know for certain that a child was abused. The mandated reporter is protected from civil and criminal liability when they make a report in good faith. It is up to *Children and Youth Services* to investigate and determine whether the child was abused and the law requires that the name of a mandated reporter be kept confidential and *Children and Youth Services* takes that requirement very seriously.

Regarding the community, it is important that they know that any person can make a report of child abuse. A voluntary reporter is called a permissive reporter. All they need is to have a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse. They can make a report by calling *Childline* at 1-800-932-0313.

## **MANDATORY RULES INTERPRETATION MEETINGS (PIAA)**

The Head Coach of the coaching staff of each member senior high school must attend the PIAA mandatory rules interpretation meeting each year for their sport. The principal of a member senior high school may appoint a representative of the coaching staff to attend the mandatory rules interpretation meeting if the head coach of the coaching staff in the sport has not been designated by the school district, and, therefore, the head coach of the coaching staff is not able to attend the annual mandatory rules interpretation meeting.

A member school that fails to have the head coach of its coaching staff, or an appointed representative of the head coach of the coaching staff, attend a minimum of one PIAA mandatory rules interpretation meeting each year for each boys' sport and for each girls' sport offered by the school, and in which a PIAA mandatory rules interpretation meeting is offered, the coach shall pay a fine of \$100.00 for non-attendance. Payment of said fine shall be made to PIAA within 30 days of notification from PIAA that the head coach or representative of the head coach of the coaching staff failed to attend the annual mandatory rules interpretation meeting. If the fine is not paid within 30 days of notification, the member school shall automatically be on probation in all sports and shall automatically forfeit the right to compete in District and inter-district championship competition in all sports until such time as the fine is paid.

It is recommended that the head coach of the coaching staff of each member junior high/middle school attend the PIAA mandatory rules interpretation meeting each year for each boy's sport and for each girl's sport coached by that staff. When the head coach of the coaching staff for a particular sport does not attend the annual mandatory rules interpretation meeting, it is required that the head coach in that sport meet with the respective senior high school head coach or appointed representative in that sport for the purpose of obtaining all of the information that was presented at the annual mandatory rules interpretation meeting.

**\*Information for specific meetings is available on the PIAA website:**  
[www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org).

### **MEDIA RESPONSIBILITIES**

The local media receives copies of all athletic schedules. It is the responsibility of the coach or their designee to ensure all scores are reported to the various media sources following the activity. Coaches are encouraged to do everything within reason to communicate with the media. Information given to the news media should be reported in a fair, but positive manner. Report any conflicts with the media to the athletic office.

### **NOMINATION OF ATHLETES FOR POST-SEASON RECOGNITION**

The head coach is responsible for the nomination of his/her athletes for post-season recognition.

### **METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)**

Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* or MRSA is a type of staph that is resistant to the antibiotic methicillin and its close cousins oxacillin, penicillin and amoxicillin. Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities (such as nursing homes and dialysis centers) who have weakened immune systems.

The main mode of spread of all forms of staph, including MRSA, is by the **hands** and skin-to-skin contact, crowded conditions, and poor hygiene. The sharing of towels, personal hygiene items like razors, athletic equipment, clothes, non-sterilized tattoo instruments, and illicit drug paraphernalia also promote the spread of *S.aureus* from one individual to another. Habits like body shaving are also thought to promote MRSA infection.

MRSA most often presents as skin or soft tissue infection such as a boil or abscess. Pimples, rashes, pus-filled boils, especially when warm, painful, red or swollen, can indicate a staph skin infection. Impetigo is one example of a skin infection that can be caused by staph, including MRSA. Patients frequently recall a “spider bite”.

Staph infections also can cause more serious infections, such as bloodstream infections or pneumonia, leading to symptoms of shortness of breath, fever, and chills.

Most MRSA infections are treated by administering good wound and skin care: incision and drainage of boils by a healthcare provider, keeping the area clean and dry, washing hands after caring for the area, carefully disposing of any bandages, and allowing the body to heal.

For more information about MRSA, refer to the district website or [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us) or contact the district Athletic Trainer.

### **MULTIPLE SPORT PARTICIPATION vs. Sport Specialization**

The Ambridge Area School District is committed to the development of well-rounded individuals both mentally and physically. During their time at Ambridge, students are encouraged to broaden their academic avenues by participating in a variety of sports and activities. Students are encouraged to participate in as many different sports as they can during their careers. Sport specialization (playing only one sport) is NOT a supported philosophy by the athletic administration or the school district. **No coach should ever try to influence a student-athlete to participate in only one sport.** Additionally, for a student to participate in more than one team per season is extraordinarily difficult and, most often not in the best interest of the student or the teams. Exceptions require the approval of the Athletic Director.

### **NCAA & NAIA ELIGIBILITY CENTERS**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization founded in 1906 that has established rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid, regulates college sports. The NCAA has three membership divisions – Division I, II and III. Institutions are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships.

If a high school student-athlete is planning to enroll in college as a freshman upon graduating from high school and they wish to participate in Division I or Division II sports, the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Center must certify them.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) founded in 1937, offers both men and women the opportunity to compete at his or her highest level.

Both the Eligibility Centers for NCAA and NAIA will analyze the student-athlete's academic information and determine if they meet the initial-eligibility requirements. The certification process for student-athletes planning to enroll as college freshmen begin August 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic high school year. Eligibility Center forms are available in the high school guidance office. More information may be found at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) and [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) as well as the school district website.

## **PIAA IN-SEASON AND OUT-OF-SEASON RULES AND REGULATIONS - Adherence and Enforcement**

The initial responsibility for adherence to and enforcement of the PIAA by-laws by the member "Ambridge Area School District" and their students and other personnel rests with the Principal of each school. However, all athletic Department employees are bound to conduct themselves in accordance with the by-laws and earnestly advocate them before others.

The PIAA Handbook, including all of the by-laws, is available at [www.piaa.org](http://www.piaa.org) or in text form in the athletic office. All coaches are encouraged to become familiar with matters related to their duties.

### **PIAA ARTICLE XVI – In-Season and Out-of-Season Rules and Regulations**

#### **Out-of-Season Activities**

Any sports activity that occurs outside the defined-season for a sport is outside the jurisdiction of PIAA, except as set forth in this Section; in ARTICLE II, AMATEUR STATUS AND AWARDS; and in ARTICLE IX, REPRESENTATION, Section 2, All-Star Contests.

#### **Outside of the defined-season for sports:**

- A. member schools may not sponsor teams;
- B. member schools and coaches and/or students of member schools may be involved with sports activities such as training programs, recreational activities, Open Gyms, clinics, and camps provided that any participation by coaches and/or students is as private citizens and is voluntary as described below;
- C. coaches and/or students acting as private citizens, and on a voluntary basis, may participate on Teams that are not affiliated with their school or other member schools during the out-of-season period. The coach or other personnel representing the school shall not require a student to participate in a sport or training programs for a sport outside of the PIAA-defined sport's season. The participation of students in any sports activity that occurs outside of its defined season must be voluntary.
- D. the school's name, nickname, interscholastic athletic uniform, interscholastic athletic equipment, and interscholastic athletic health/first-aid supplies may not be used by community organizations and groups. The school's name, nickname and interscholastic athletic uniforms may not be used by students; however, the Principal, with the exception of football equipment, may permit students to use the school's interscholastic athletic equipment and the school's interscholastic athletic health/first-aid supplies.

### **Attendance at Clinics and Conferences Procedure**

Coaches desiring to attend clinics or conferences and requesting school district reimbursement for any part of the expenses **must be pre-approved by the athletic director**. Requests for permission to attend clinics must be submitted to the athletic office at least one month prior to when the clinic is to be held. This will allow time for presentation to the school board in the event the clinic is outside the area identified as "routine travel". Travel involving an overnight is non-routine travel, and clinics generally fall under this classification. Clinics in the area considered as "routine travel" do not need to be approved by the board. "REQUEST FOR TRAVEL/CONFERENCE FUNDS AND/OR PROFESSIONAL LEAVE SECONDARY DIVISION" are available in the athletic office.

If it is necessary to be absent from school to attend the clinic, the requesting coach(es) must also complete a "REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ABSENCE FOR PROFESSIONAL REASONS" through his/her principal.

### **SECURITY OF PERSONAL PROPERTY**

While the school district is not responsible for the loss of personal property of students, the best defense against theft is educating your student-athletes about the possibility and offering suggestions for properly securing their personal possessions.

1. Encourage student-athletes **not** to carry expensive items, large sums of money or wear expensive jewelry to practice or contests.
2. Provide a secure place for valuables to be held until the practice or event is over.

In conjunction with the philosophy of "safe schools", it is important that outside doors remain closed and secure at all times. Please aid in this effort to keep our schools safe. **IMPORTANT:** Coaches should not give building keys to student-athletes to use for any reason.

### **SELF-MEDICATION BY STUDENT-ATHLETE PROTOCOL**

While medications for self-administration may be kept on a student-athlete's person\*, they may not be shared with others or stored in any common areas. There are to be no communal medications.

Coaches and athletic trainers may not administer any medications to students -- with the exception of emergency medications. Students with such conditions are listed on the emergency contact form distributed to coaches at the beginning of the season for reference.

***\*Students must have a form on file with the school nurse allowing self-medication during school hours.***



## **STORAGE/EQUIPMENT AREAS**

There are storage/equipment areas throughout the campus and buildings. These areas are to be used to store in-season equipment. All coaches must ensure that areas are secured before leaving the facility after each day of use. Area keys may be obtained through the Athletic Director. No keys may be reproduced. Keys must be returned to the Athletic Director when a coach is no longer coaching in the district.

## **TEAM WEBSITES**

Teams are encouraged to promote themselves through the use of the AASD Athletics Department website. Head coaches are designated as authors for their respective websites, which are linked to the AASD Athletics Website.

## **TITLE IX - FEMALE PARTICIPANTS**

Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act, passed in 1972, requires equity between men and women in three areas: equal opportunity to participate in sports in relation to the percentage of men and women in the student body; equal access to scholarship money; and facilities and support services.

The Ambridge Area School District is committed to providing equal opportunities for all persons without regard to sex, race, creed, religion, ethnic background or handicap in its educational programs, policies and employment practices. Inquiries should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator.

Additionally, in the event that there is participation in a sport by females, and said sport is coached by a male, said coach shall be absolved of all responsibility involved in the supervision of said female athletes during such periods of time when it is not possible for the coach, because of his sex, to be present (i.e. the dressing room prior to and after an athletic event, practice, etc.). When necessary, a female will be present to supervise in these situations as assigned by the Athletic Director.

## **ATHLETIC TRAINING FACILITIES**

Coaches are encouraged to visit the Athletic Training Room to familiarize themselves with the facility as well as to make themselves known to the Athletic Training staff. It is the coach's responsibility to inform student-athletes of the services available to them. Proper treatment and rehabilitation of injuries will return student-athletes to practice and competition sooner and reduce the risk of re-injury.

Coaches must remind all student-athletes that equipment issued to them by an Athletic Trainer is the property of the Athletic Training Room and they will be held accountable

for its return. Also, please stress the importance of obeying all rules of the Athletic Training Room when reporting there for treatment.

### **Rules and Regulations of the Athletic Training Room**

- The Athletic Training Room is a medical facility; act accordingly
- Use universal precautions to protect yourself and others from infectious diseases
- Be respectful of the Athletic Trainer's time and efforts to assist you
- Be courteous and polite to all Athletic Training staff and Athletic Training Students; anything less may be grounds for removal from the facility
- The Athletic Training Room is co-educational facility; dress accordingly
- Shirts and shorts must be worn at all time
- Only athletes receiving treatment or waiting to see the Athletic Trainer's should be in the Athletic Training Room.

### **RETURN TO PLAY CRITERIA**

Following a complete physical assessment, the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) may, at his/her discretion and in accordance with approved protocols, return an athlete to practice or competition unless the athlete is under the current (proximate) care of a licensed physician. When the athlete is under the care of a licensed physician, the Licensed Athletic Trainer must have written or verbal documentation from the treating physician in order to return the athlete to practice or competition. Final return to play decisions will be made in cooperation and agreement with the treating licensed physician, Licensed Athletic Trainer and in accordance with approved protocols, policies and procedures. If an athlete is not being seen by a licensed physician following an injury, the Licensed Athletic Trainer will determine when the athlete returns to practice or competition.

### **ADHERENCE TO FERPA REGULATIONS - FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records. The law applies to all schools, which receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, who has reached the age of 18 or is attending any school beyond the high school level. Students and former students to whom the rights have transferred are called eligible students.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

- Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:
  - School employees who have a need to know;
  - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - Organizations conducting certain studies for the school;
  - Accrediting organizations;
  - Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
  - Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may also disclose, without consent, "directory" type information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTO bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper) is left to the discretion of each school.

Pre-participation physical exam materials may be shared with other AASD employees and offices. The Certified Athletic Trainer(s) will not release medical records or injury information without the consent of the student-athlete (over 18 years of age) or parent/guardian.

### **ADHERENCE TO HIPAA REGULATIONS - HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)**

Congress passed HIPAA in 1996 to deal with the rising health-care costs and the medical industry's growing use of electronic commerce and the Internet. Among several of its aims is to protect the privacy of people's medical information. Patient's medical records are increasingly being stored as computer files and flying around the Internet during electronic claims, billing, care authorization, and other administrative tasks. HIPAA has privacy rules forbidding health-care providers, insurers, and claims

clearinghouses from selling or otherwise providing medical information to anyone who doesn't legitimately need it.

Unless the patient specifically authorizes release for a certain purpose, only those involved in treating a patient, insurers deciding whether procedures are covered, public-health officials, and researchers can access a person's private medical information. Anyone who maintains such records has to set up procedures to ensure they are kept private.

Information pertaining to a student-athlete's injury may be released to coaches from athletic trainers/physicians on a limited basis; for example:

- Whether an injury occurred
- What body part was involved
- What limitations are imposed on the student-athlete's participation

Any questions from media sources regarding a student-athlete's health should be referred to the athletics training staff.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has seen an explosion in recent years as more and more people are using these methods for mass and public communication.

Students and adults have taken communication to the levels that could not have been imagined over a quarter of a century ago. Letters, numbers and symbols have taken on different meanings in communication. Not only are messages and photos sent instantly, they can express or evoke emotions – anger, fear, sadness and happiness – via an array of seemingly random letters/numbers posing as words or sentences. The consequences of these messages and images can be productive and positive but also potentially very dangerous.

The perceived anonymity of posting messages and images to chat rooms, blogs or text messaging can create a false sense of security to the user, prompting a student to think “it's no big deal”. This assumption is clearly wrong and potentially harmful. A quick scan of the daily news re-affirms the dangers of cyber-bullying, sexual predators, and identity thefts, as well as the development of inappropriate relationships between adults and minors.

In 2007, of all the visitors to social networking websites in America, 40.6% were adults ages 35-54. It is clear that social networking websites are not exclusive to young people. Interscholastic coaches have a moral and legal responsibility to maintain an appropriate professional adult-to-minor relationship with their students. Interscholastic coaches may be held liable for inappropriate activity with minors using electronic communication devices.

Coaches should limit their social media communication with student-athletes for information purposes only. Commenting on Facebook and *Twitter* or texting personal or intimate information to student-athletes is both inappropriate and unnecessary. Coaches should only use social media avenues to disseminate team information that is relative to the operation and management of the team and is appropriate.

## APPENDIX A

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR LETTERING**

The requirements for earning a varsity “A” letter for the different athletic teams are as follows:

#### **ALL SPORTS**

A student in any school sponsored program is eligible for a varsity letter if they meet any one of the following criteria:

1. An athlete can earn a letter at the discretion of the head coach even if established criteria is not met, depending on the athlete’s commitment and contribution made to the total program and with approval from the Athletic Director. **An athlete must play in varsity competition to be considered for a letter.**
2. All athletes must finish the season in good standing to be eligible for a varsity letter.
3. A manager/statistician may be awarded a letter after three (3) years of satisfactory service.
4. A senior player who has participated in the program for three (3) years, has shown dedication to the program, and has made a contribution to the program, or upon the head coach’s recommendation.

#### **ATHLETIC TRAINER**

To earn a varsity letter, a student athletic trainer must meet the minimal requirements of 550 hours. Breakdown of hours: Fall = 200, Winter = 200, Spring = 150

#### **BASEBALL**

- A varsity player who participates in at least (1/3) of the season’s total innings in varsity games.
- A player, (i.e. Pitcher, DH, DR), who has made a significant contribution to the varsity team as determined by the coaches.

#### **BASKETBALL**

A player who has participated in one half of the total varsity quarters in the season (exhibition and section games).

#### **CHEERLEADING**

- A cheerleader will letter when she has successfully completed one year of participating on the Varsity Squad.
- JV members are eligible to letter if they also are on the Competition Squad.

## **CROSS COUNTRY**

Cross Country letter requirements are based on both attendance & performance. A total of 22 points are needed to letter based on the table below.

<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>POSSIBLE POINTS</u>
<i>Practice</i> - 1 point will be awarded for each week of attendance (11 weeks)	11
<i>Scrimmages</i> - 1 point will be awarded for the scrimmage run	1
<i>Invitationals, WCCA, and WPIAL Meets</i> - 1 point for each	4
<u>PERFORMANCE</u>	<u>POSSIBLE POINTS</u>
<i>Dual Meets</i> – 1 point will be awarded each time the athlete places in the top 12	11
<i>Invitationals</i> – 1 point will be awarded each time the athlete places in the top 30	2
<i>County</i> – 3 points will be awarded if the athlete places in the top 30.	3
<i>WPIAL</i> – 3 points will be awarded if the athlete places in the top 30.	3
<i>PR</i> – 1 point will be awarded if athlete improves their time 3 times during the season	1

## **FOOTBALL**

A player must participate in at least half of the quarters played during the regular season.

## **GOLF**

Earn an average of half point per match of the total matches played during the season.

## **HOCKEY**

A player must participate in at least half of the regular season games.

## **SOCCER**

A player must participate in at least half of the halves played during the regular season.

## **SOFTBALL**

In order for an athlete to be considered for a letter, she must meet at least one of the requirements as follows:

- A varsity player who participates in at least (1/3) of the season's total innings in varsity games.
- A player (i.e. Pitcher, DH, etc.) who has made a significant contribution to team as determined by the coaches.

## **SWIMMING**

Must score a point total equal to or greater than 25% of the top point scorer for the season.

**TENNIS**

A player must participate in at least half of the varsity matches played during the season. (Includes exhibition matches)

**TRACK & FIELD**

- An average of two points per varsity dual meet. (Example: 10 dual meets, must average 20 points) Dual Relays – five points to each runner for first.
- Triangular – five-three points to each runner for first or second respectively.
- Total points are tripled for Invitationals and County Meets.

**VOLLEYBALL**

A player must participate in at least half of the varsity games played during the season.

**WRESTLING**

Must have wrestled in half of all scheduled varsity matches.

**SWIMMING & DIVING**

- Must compete in a minimum of 5 competitions throughout the season.
- Must qualify for the WPIAL Championships

**GYMNASTICS**

- Must compete in a minimum of 6 competitions throughout the season.
- Must qualify for the WPIAL Championships.



## AMBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL LETTER WINNER RECORD SHEET

**School Year:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. List all sports' participants who finished the season in Alphabetical order to help speed up filing procedures.
2. List grade level of each participant.
3. Use the following code for awards and mark appropriate column for each participant with an "X" following the award system.

**4 = 4TH YEAR (Chevron & PLAQUE)**

[illegible]

## APPENDIX C

**Sport/Level:**

**Coach's Name:**

**Position:**

**Date:**

**Levels of Evaluation Achievement:**

- 3- Distinguished: showing superior achievement & positive initiative with evidence and effectiveness in this area (athlete driven basis)
- 2- Proficient: showing consistent positive evidence and effectiveness in this area
- 1- Needs Improvement: shows some, but not consistent, evidence of effectiveness in this area
- 0- Failing: lacking or demonstrating inconsistent evidence of effectiveness in this area

	Notes	Evaluation
<b>Domain 1: Planning &amp; Preparation:</b> Demonstrating Knowledge of Sport & Coaching Pedagogy, Demonstrating Knowledge of Student-Athletes, Setting Goals & Outcomes, Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources, Designing Coherent Coaching Practices, Designing Student-Athlete Assessments		3 - 2 - 1 - 0
<b>Domain 2: Culture &amp; Environment:</b> Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport, Establishing a Positive Culture, Managing Practice/ Game Procedures, Managing Student-Athlete Behavior, Organizing & Maintaining Physical Spaces		3 - 2 - 1 - 0
<b>Domain 3: Instructional Coaching:</b> Communicating with Student-Athletes, Engaging Student-Athletes, Using Assessment in Instructional Practices, Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness		3 - 2 - 1 - 0
<b>Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities:</b> Reflecting on Coaching, Maintaining Accurate Records, Communicating with Families & Community, Community & Student-Athlete Development, Growing, Supporting and Developing Professionally, Showing Professionalism		3 - 2 - 1 - 0

Athletic Administrator's Data/Comments:

Coach's Comments / Goals: (optional)

*The coach's signature indicates he/she has read this evaluation. The coach has five (5) days from the date below to respond in writing to any portion of this evaluation with which he/she does not agree.*

Coach's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Athletic Administrator's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

All school district gym practice times:

As we prepare for the Fall 2025 season and beyond, we are implementing a new structured practice schedule to better support the development of our athletic programs across all seasons in our gymnasium. Starting this fall, each of our athletic gym facilities will follow a two-session daily practice format:

Practice Time Slots:

- 2:30 PM - 5:55 PM
- 6:00 PM - 8:55 PM

Each time slot will be dedicated to a *single team* within a facility, providing uninterrupted access and a focused environment for training and skill development. This structure will allow our student-athletes and coaching staffs to take full advantage of their assigned spaces, leading to more efficient practices and enhanced team performance. Each team must leave the area by the time their slot expires. You are to have all of your equipment and practice items put away by the end of your session, as to not over flow into the next scheduled slot.

Benefits of the Updated Practice Structure:

- Guarantees consistent facility access for all teams.
- Eliminates overlap and scheduling conflicts during practice.
- Enhances practice quality by providing teams with exclusive use of space.
- Promotes fairness and balanced access across all sports and levels.

We are now accepting time slot requests for the Fall 2025 season. Please submit your preferred practice times to the Athletic Office as soon as possible. All previous rules regarding practice durations, supervision, and conduct remain in effect.

If practice times cannot be mutually agreed upon among coaching staffs, the Athletic Office will assign time slots as needed.

Thank you for your cooperation and for your continued commitment to our student-athletes. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out.

## Ambridge Area Athletic Travel Release Form

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to ride

(Student's Name)

from the \_\_\_\_\_ athletic contest on \_\_\_\_\_

(Sport)

(Date)

from \_\_\_\_\_.

(Location of Contest)

I certify that I am personally transporting the above named student, or have arranged for transportation with an adult (non-

student) of my choosing for this

student. \_\_\_\_\_

(Name of the adult if other than parent)

The reason for not riding the bus after the contest is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. I understand that the Ambridge Area School District Athletic

Rules require students to ride the buses to and from all athletic events and departure from this requirement will release the

Ambridge Area School District from all liability for any adverse results which may occur. I agree to release the Ambridge Area

School District and its employees and officers from all liability with reference to the above stated transportation. This form

must be signed by the High School Principal, Assistant Principal or Athletic Director and be presented to the athletic office

and head coach before the team departs from Ambridge Middle School or Sr. High for the event specified.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent or Guardian/Date)

# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK SIGN-OFF SHEET

**2025-2026**

Student Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## UPDATED STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

(Please update all recent changes or new information)

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ (Mother) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Father) \_\_\_\_\_

(Legal Guardian)

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS (adult other than parent/guardian)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Only a parent/guardian can pick up a student in all situations unless another adult is listed under "Emergency Contacts"