

PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of athletics is to provide extracurricular learning experiences, which contribute to physical, mental, social and emotional growth. Athletics should foster the development of positive self-esteem and a climate among all parties involved where mutual respect is valued. Athletics fulfills a necessary and important function in the entire educational process throughout the Hanover Public Schools.

Tryouts are open to all students, providing they are in good standing academically, are good citizens and are physically fit to participate. Participation in the athletics is a privilege, which students earn by maintaining these standards.

GOVERNING BODIES THE MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION AND THE PATRIOT LEAGUE

Hanover Public Schools is a member in good standing of the MIAA and the Patriot League. With membership, the Principal and Athletic Department agree to abide by all rules and regulations of each organization. One of the primary functions of the MIAA is to sponsor and conduct post-season tournaments at the varsity level leading to the determination of district and state champions. When teams qualify for and enter such tournaments, we are subject to specific rules and regulations that govern each tournament.

ATHLETE/COACH RELATIONSHIPS

Participation in athletics should be a rewarding experience for all parties involved; student, coach and parent. There is no doubt that participation tends to be emotionally charged, and dealing constructively with these emotions can be an excellent learning experience. In most cases, athletic competition is extremely positive and complements the educational experience enjoyed by students in the Hanover Public Schools. Occasionally, because of the high emotional level present during athletic competition, conflicts arise between coaches and students. These conflicts must be addressed and resolved so that the many benefits of athletic involvement may continue to contribute to the emotional and physical growth of Hanover Public School students. The next few segments of this handbook deal with communication between parents and the coaching staff, and how to appropriately navigate conflicts and/or problems present themselves.

TO THE PARENTS

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

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all participants in their program.
3. Locations and times of practices and official events.
4. Team requirements; practices, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning.
5. Procedures followed should your child be injured during participation.
6. Discipline procedures relative to your child's participation.

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach in an appropriate setting.
2. Notifications of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns with regards to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations. As your child becomes involved in the programs of the Hanover Public Schools, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you and your child wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

There are situations that may require a meeting between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged because it is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the other's position. Coaches take their profession seriously. Many judgment decisions are formed based on what is believed to be the best for all students involved.

When a parent-coach meeting becomes necessary to help promote the resolution of a concern, the following procedure should be used:

1. Contact the Head Coach to arrange a meeting. Email communication is preferred. Email addresses for each Head Coach are accessible on the Hanover High School Athletic website.
2. Coaches should never be contacted at their residence. A coach's personal time is limited during the season and should be respected.
3. Please do not approach a coach before/after a contest/practice to communicate a concern.

If the meeting between parent and coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution of the issue:

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director.
2. The Athletic Director will listen carefully to your concerns.
Please be confident that your concerns are important to us. Never hesitate to follow the above procedures to make those concerns known. Together we can work to improve our athletic programs.

COMMITMENT

When trying out for a team and after being selected to be a member of a team, Hanover Public Schools student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and games of that team. Weekend practices vary by sport and should be expected. High School athletics demand much more commitment than a club or recreational activity. Students and parents should make themselves aware of the time commitment prior to trying out for the team.

SCHOOL/FAMILY VACATIONS, EXTENDED ABSENCES

Each team member is expected to be present for all team practices and games. Because of scheduling parameters, many of our teams practice and/or play during scheduled school vacations. Student-athletes who plan to be absent for an extended period of time due to vacation or a planned extended absence should discuss this situation with the coach prior to trying out for the team.

MIAA BONAFIDE TEAM MEMBER RULE

A "bona fide team member" of the school team is a student who is regularly present for, and actively participates in, all team practices and competitions. Bona fide team members are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to practice or compete on a non-school team. A coach does not have the right to excuse a team member from practice so that he or she may practice or play for another team. The Principal may request a waiver of the rule only in special circumstances. This must be done one month prior to the outside activity.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Hanover High School student-athletes are reminded at the beginning of each season of the requirements. See the Attendance Policy in the Hanover High School Student Handbook.

STUDENT SUSPENSION

A student who is serving any type of suspension shall not participate in extracurricular or athletic activities. Activity sponsors and coaches shall be notified of such suspensions on that day.

MEDICAL EXAMS/PARENTAL PERMISSION FORMS

All students who participate in athletics must provide proof of a current physical exam signed by a physician. In order for the exam to be current, it must be dated within 13 months of any athletic involvement. It is strongly recommended that an annual exam be scheduled between June and August of each school year. Such an exam would cover a student for an entire school year. Sports candidate medical questionnaire forms, which contain important emergency and insurance information, must be completed by the athlete and parents prior to participation.

INSURANCE

A non-contributory, supplemental insurance program is provided for all participants in interscholastic sports. It is the obligation of the athlete and his family to complete the necessary forms to qualify for benefits. Details regarding insurance coverage can be obtained from the school nurse.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Academic Performance: Students opting to participate in athletics should keep in mind that academic achievement should be a priority. Frequently, the most successful athletes are those who perform well academically in the classroom and are instrumental in promoting a positive learning environment in the Hanover Public Schools. Summary of Eligibility Rules: Any student who is academically ineligible cannot participate in interscholastic sports. This includes all practice and game situations.

Students will be ineligible for one or more of the following conditions:

1. A student is not enrolled in the equivalent to four traditional year-long 'major' English courses.
2. A student has more than one failing grade. Incomplete grades are considered failing grades until updated in Aspen.
3. Recommendation by the Principal due to violations of the Hanover High School Handbook.

To be eligible for fall sports, a student is required to have passed and received full credits for the previous academic year, the equivalent of four traditional year-long English courses..

All 9th grade students are eligible for fall sports.

The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determined only on the date when report cards for that marking period have been posted to Aspen.

TIME ALLOWED FOR PARTICIPATION

A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive athletic seasons beyond the 8th grade. A student must be less than 19 years of age as of September 1 of the current school year.

TEAM RULES AND REGULATIONS

At the start of each season, a coach with the approval of the Athletic Director may issue a set of team rules and regulations to his/her team. It is suggested that these be in written form and passed out to the athletes.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Students have an obligation and responsibility for all equipment issued them. Each student is responsible for the proper care and retention of their equipment from the date of issue to the date of return. Students will be charged the current replacement cost for any missing equipment. Payment for the loss is required at the time of the loss, prior to the next season of athletic involvement or graduation, whichever comes first. No student will be allowed to try out for another sport until all outstanding equipment has been returned or paid for. If an athlete leaves a team during the season due to injury, academics, and discipline or of their own volition, it is their responsibility to return all school equipment.

TRANSPORTATION

The athletic department provides transportation to the majority of away contests. There are exceptions related to programs that compete at privately owned facilities (ice hockey, gymnastics, golf, swimming & diving). All team members are expected to travel to these contests using the provided school transportation. Exceptions to this policy should be requested via an email to the Athletic Director by the student's parent/guardian prior to the contest. In extenuating circumstances, a coach may give permission for student-athletes to ride home from a game site with their parent or guardian.

BUILDING AND FACILITY ACCESS

No student is allowed access to any of the athletic facilities without proper supervision. Students may not use the gymnasium or weight room unless there is proper supervision.

ATHLETIC TRAINER AND TRAINING ROOM

The Hanover Public Schools has an athletic trainer on site to evaluate and treat athletic injuries. The Athletic Trainer provides medical coverage for athletic contests and practices, but is limited to being at one place at any one time. In case of an injury, the Athletic Trainer will evaluate and recommend to the parent/guardian the direction of care. If a visit to the hospital or physician is necessary, a written medical note releasing the athlete for treatment or return to participation is mandatory. Athletes may report to the Athletic Trainer any time after school for treatment or evaluation.

PLAYING TIME

Perhaps the most emotional part of a student-athlete being involved with high school athletics centers around playing time. The student-athlete becomes involved in interscholastic athletics for the first time and finds that practices and expectations are much more intense and demanding. Factors such as practice attendance, attitude, commitment, and, of course, athletic skill enter into the decision.

There are many decisions made on a regular basis by the coaching staff. It is the Coaches' responsibility to decide which athlete should start a contest, which should play what position, and how long each athlete should play. These coaching decisions, often difficult to make, are made only by the coaching staff and are approached very seriously after having observed the student-athlete in practices sessions, game-like situations, scrimmages, and at times, games.

At the Varsity level, we look for our teams to compete against opponents at the highest possible level of execution. This is the highest level of interscholastic competition, and players, coaches, parents, staff, and community want our Varsity Teams to be successful on the field of play. In order to accomplish this, there are instances when the most competitive, skilled team members will carry the major burden of the contest. However, teams cannot and will not be successful without dedicated substitutes and "role" players. These players have to be ready at all times to step forward and shoulder the burden when called upon. It is these student-athletes whose hard work in practice each day prepares the team for the upcoming contest. Success should not be measured only by wins and losses, but by the performance of our individual athletes. If they perform to the best of their abilities, they will be successful, no matter what the final score may be.

TEAM CAPTAINS

Selection of Captains is at the discretion of the Head Coach. Student input is valuable in the process and is collected via an online form. It is expected that team captains be leaders of their program and should be ready to assume duties as outlined by the Head Coach. They are expected to have an in-depth knowledge of team rules and student-athlete responsibilities. Captains are expected to communicate with the coach and team in the event of any problems that may affect the team or its members. Captains may be asked to meet with the Athletic Director during the school year to discuss the athletic program. Captains of teams may be relieved of their position by the coach, in consultation with the Director of Athletics, for violation of team, department, or school rules.

SECURITY OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All personal belongings should be locked up in a locker or team room while the student-athlete is trying out, practicing, or playing. All students should lock their athletic lockers and should never leave their locker unlocked or open. The Hanover Public Schools cannot be responsible for loss of personal belongings.

LOCKER ROOM AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

Student-athletes are expected to respect all athletic facilities. We expect the student-athletes to take pride in their facilities and those of opponents by using trash receptacles and keeping these facilities in good condition. Any type of vandalism will not be tolerated.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE OBLIGATION

A student-athlete with a school disciplinary obligation is required to fulfill that obligation before reporting to an athletic practice and/or game. Students should not expect, nor request disciplinary action to be postponed or canceled for any athletic reason. The Athletic Department, in conjunction with the High School Administration, reserve the right to remove a student from a team for excessive disciplinary problems and may reinstate the student upon sufficient evidence of improved behavior.

COLLEGE/CAREER GUIDANCE

One of the most important decisions facing high school students is what to do with their lives after high school. The members of the Hanover Public Schools Athletic Staff are willing and eager to assist all of their students with this extremely important decision. Staff members fully understand the importance of this assistance. They may be able to answer questions, contact schools and coaches, send highlights, if available, and write letters of recommendations. The least they will be able to do is guide students to a more knowledgeable resource who can help with decisions. If a student's goal is to compete athletically at the collegiate level, it is very important to be aware of the ever-changing NCAA regulations. The high school guidance departments can help you with information on the NCAA regulations.

SPORTSMANSHIP

The Hanover Public Schools expect all parties at a contest to display the highest level of sportsmanship. Players, coaches, and spectators are to treat opponents, game officials and visiting spectators with respect. Hanover Public Schools coaches and players should treat each other with respect at all times.

The MIAA reserves the right to "warn, censure, place on probation or suspend for up to one calendar year any player, team, coach, game or school official or school determined to be acting in a manner contrary to the standards of good sportsmanship." The Hanover Public Schools in turn reserves the right to impose the same penalties on spectators displaying poor sportsmanship at any of our contests, home or away.

MIAA CHEMICAL HEALTH RULE: ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS

During the school athletic year (first fall practice-last day of school), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. Additional information, including consequences, may be referenced in rule 62 of the MIAA Handbook.

INTENT TO INJURE RULE

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Rule 49.3.9 states, any student who willfully, flagrantly, or maliciously attempts to injure an opponent shall be removed from the contest immediately and shall be ineligible in all sports for one year from the date of the incident. ("Fighting" does not apply to this section unless warranted in the judgment of the game official.)

OUT OF SEASON SPORTS INVOLVEMENT

Participation in out-of-season clinics, camps, leagues, or other related sport activities is strictly up to the discretion of the student-athlete and his/her parents. While such participation will undoubtedly improve one's knowledge and skill, it is the individual's decision on whether or not they wish to become involved in such activities. Participation in such activities will have no bearing on a student-athlete's participation on a Hanover Public Schools athletic team. The Department of Athletics encourages all students to take full advantage of the activities we offer and become involved in more than one sport.

According to MIAA rules, "Neither a coach nor any other representative of the school may require an athlete to participate in a sport or training program outside the MIAA defined sport season." Voluntary conditioning sessions open to all students in the school and which are entirely devoid of sports-specific activity may be conducted between sessions provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so. A "candidate" is defined as a varsity or sub-varsity athlete who participated in the high school program at some interscholastic level in that part the previous season.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation unto any student organization, which willingly or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or person. Incidents of hazing must be reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials as soon as reasonable.

HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the policy of the Hanover Public Schools to provide a learning and working atmosphere free of harassment, including sexual harassment. The Hanover Public Schools expect all members of our community to treat each other with dignity and respect. Harassment or any of its manifestation, on the basis of race, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, ability, or disability will not be tolerated.

SUMMATION

The Hanover Public Schools has made a commitment to athletics. We firmly believe that a sound athletic program is an integral part of education. The Athletic Department strives to have as many students as possible participate in interscholastic sports. If you decide to join us, we are confident it will be a decision you will not regret.