

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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Letter from Athletic Director, Daniel DiSotto

Dear Gardner-Dickinson School Parents and Students,

I would like to welcome you and your child to modified athletics at Gardner-Dickinson School. This handbook was created for you as a reference tool to understand the policies and procedures pertaining to athletics at Gardner-Dickinson School.

At Gardner-Dickinson School, we view interscholastic athletics as an extension of our traditional day. Research tells us that students that are involved in school activities, including athletics, do better academically, have fewer discipline problems and have better time management skills.

This is an exciting time in a middle school student's life and I am asking for your support of our program. We believe that students should feel privileged and honored to represent our school and community. In return, we want to offer our students a safe and healthy experience by encouraging personal growth, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The Gardner-Dickinson School is governed by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and Section II. We have outlined the rules, regulations and guidelines for athletes and spectators in the following pages. Please make sure that you and your child are familiar with them.

If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail at ddisotto@wynantskillufsd.org. I look forward to a great year working with you and to giving your child the best athletic experience possible.

Sincerely,
Dan DiSotto
Athletic Director

Modified Athletic Sports Philosophy Statement

The modified program is available to all 7th and 8th-grade students. The focus of modified sports is to introduce athletes to the fundamental skills involved in the sport(s) of their choice. Students will develop physical skills as well as social/emotional skills through being part of a team. Greater emphasis will be placed on player development and less emphasis will be placed on game outcome.

Modified sports are considered to be an extension of the academic program and therefore will be treated that way. Being part of a Gardner-Dickinson School team, athletes will not only learn physical skills, but also teamwork, cooperation, communication, time management, and social development. Gardner-Dickinson School athletes represent our school and our community.

At the modified level, as many students as possible will be included on the teams. However, to create a safe and meaningful experience, coaches may need to limit their rosters by holding tryouts.

Sportsmanship and Fair Play, Section II, NYSPHSAA

Visiting team members, students, and adult spectators are guests and should be afforded the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered, well-intentioned host would normally provide. Remember:

- Officials are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretation. These decisions should be accepted.
- Spectators, student-athletes, and coaches must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their positive actions are directly related to the success of their teams.

Requirements for Eligibility to Participate in Modified Sports Program

All athletes must:

- have a physical within one year prior to participation. All athletes must also have completed a health history and be approved by the school nurse prior to a practice or competition.
- complete/update the Health Update Form for each sport playing.

- sign the Athletic Participation Form.
- be in school for the full day in order to participate in practices and games.
- ride the school bus provided to every game

Risk

By the very nature of athletic activity, participants are at risk of physical injury. No matter how careful the coach and athletes are, there are some risks that cannot be eliminated. It is important that everyone understands the many potential forms of injury that may result from play. All athletes need to follow safety directions from their coaches to reduce risk of injury.

Concussions

There is growing concern over head injuries, particularly concussions. Please take special note of the attached handout explaining the signs and symptoms of these and what you should do. Please let the coach know if your child is experiencing any of these symptoms after a head injury (whether it be at school through play on another sports team or at home). For the safety of our children and athletes, it is very important to have communication between parents and coaches. A concussion is classified as a form of traumatic brain injury category, according to physicians. A second head injury could also lead to “Second Impact Syndrome.” We will address each case on an individual basis. It is better to sit out one game than miss an entire season!

As per the July 1, 2012 legislation, we will follow a ***Return to Play*** procedure for all diagnosed concussions. Once the student is symptom-free for 24 hours and cleared by the treating physician, the student may begin the five-day ***Return to Play*** procedure. If at any stage symptoms occur, the student must stop and resume the following day at the previous level. No student will continue to play on the day that the suspected concussion occurs. Please see the attached Wynantskill Union Free School District Board Policies on Concussion Management or visit the school website at www.wynantskillufsd.org for a copy of the policies and procedures (Policies: 5410 Concussion Management and 5410-R, Concussion Guidelines, and Procedures).

Responsibilities of an Athlete

As Gardner-Dickinson School athletes, students are representatives of their school and their community. Athletes are expected to act appropriately in all social situations, follow all

Section II and NYSPHSAA sportsmanship rules, as well as follow the District's Code of Conduct at all times.

Responsibilities of the Coach

Coaches are responsible for the health and safety of their athletes at all times during practices and competitions. Coaches will provide athletes with the knowledge and skills to help them develop as athletes and as individuals.

Attendance

Athletes are expected to attend all practices and games. They must be in school for the full day as well as participate in scheduled physical education classes in order to participate in practices and games that day. If a student is suspended from school, he/she will be ineligible to participate in sports during the suspension period.

Transportation

The Wynantskill Union Free School District will provide transportation to and from all contests. Custodial parents or guardians may pick up their child from an away contest by signing them out with the coach. If someone other than a custodial parent or guardian (e.g., grandparent, sibling, or neighbor) is to pick up your child, you need to send a note to the principal **24 hours in advance** of the contest so that this designated person will be allowed to sign your child out. All athletes **MUST** ride the bus to away contests or they will **NOT** be eligible to participate in that contest.

Equipment and Uniforms

The Wynantskill Union Free School District will supply some pieces of equipment and uniforms necessary for competition. It is the responsibility of the student to return all issued clothing and equipment to the coach. Any lost or stolen equipment must be paid for by the student. The student will not be allowed to participate at the start of the next season or receive athletic awards until **ALL** equipment and clothing is returned or paid for.

Procedures for Discussing Concerns with a Coach

If a parent has a concern, they should:

- schedule a meeting with the coach.
- not attempt to talk to a coach before or after a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

If the meeting with the coach was not satisfactory, the parent should

Schedule an appointment with the Athletic Director and/or Principal. The parent, coach, Athletic Director and Principal will meet to discuss the problem. At this meeting, the appropriate next step will be determined.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches would be:

- the mental or physical treatment of your child.
- suggestions to help your child improve.
- concerns about your child's behavior.

It is never appropriate to discuss team strategy, play calling, playing time or other students with the coach.

School Closing/Early Dismissal

When the school is closed due to inclement weather or other unplanned circumstances, teams **WILL NOT** practice or compete in games or scrimmages. Teams will not practice or compete in games or scrimmages when there is an early dismissal due to weather or other unplanned circumstances.

School Contact Numbers

Athletic Director_---_Daniel DiSotto, 518-283-4600 Ext. 237

Principal_--- Shannon Toomey, 518-283-4600. Ext. 203

Superintendent_---_Dr. Yodis, 518-283-4600 Ext. 250

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I sign my student out, after an away competition?

A. Yes. You must sign them out with the coach. Only you may pick up your child unless you have prior approval from the principal.

Q. Can another relative/friend sign my child out from an away competition?

A. Yes. If you sent a note to the principal 24 hours in advance.

Q. What happens if there are discipline problems with my child?

A. The District's Code of Conduct remains the same for athletics. Coaches are in charge of and responsible for their teams and the individual athletes.

Q. Who do I contact if I have a problem?

A. The first contact is with the Coach. If the problem is still not resolved, then contact the Athletic Director. If needed, the next step would be to contact the Principal.

Q. What if my child has a conflict with a scheduled (or rescheduled) game?

A. When a student makes the team, he/she is committing to being there for all scheduled games. If there are unique conflicts, please notify the coach before tryouts. If there are conflicts that interfere with the student-athlete's full commitment to the team, then the student-athlete will need to make a choice about which commitment they will honor.

Q. What happens if my child quits a team?

A. Trying out and making a commitment to participate on a team carries a responsibility to that team. When a player quits a team, he/she may be letting the rest of the team down and may also put the team in jeopardy of having to forfeit games. This is particularly difficult when there have been some prospective players not chosen for the team after tryouts. We ask that all players remember that in joining the team, they are making a commitment to be there. A player who quits his/her obligation will not be allowed to participate on sports teams for the remainder of the school year.

Wynantskill Union Free School District (WUFSD)

Guidelines for Athletic Participation Authorization Form

Student's Name (Please Print) _____

Grade _____

Athletic Team (Please Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Authorization

By signing below, you indicate that you have read the WUFSD Athletic Handbook for students and parents/guardians. You are aware of the risk factors in sports and the guidelines for athletic participation in the athletic program at the Gardner-Dickinson School. By signing this document, you agree to comply with all stated policies, procedures and expectations.

Parent/Guardian

Date

Home Phone #

E-Mail

Student Authorization

By signing below, you indicate that you have read the WUFSD Athletic Handbook for students and parents/guardians. You are aware of the risk factors in sports and the guidelines for athletic participation in the athletic program at the Gardner-Dickinson School. By signing this document, you agree to comply with all stated policies, procedures, and expectations.

Student-Athlete Signature

Date

Home Phone #

This form must be signed and returned to the respective coach.



A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

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

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just “not feeling right” or “feeling down”

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION OR OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN INJURY?

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
 - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no “concussion-proof” helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

- 1. SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.
- 2. KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a repeat concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
- 3. TELL YOUR CHILD’S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.** Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

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

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/Concussion.