

**Seneca Valley  
High School  
“Screaming  
Eagles”**



**Student-  
Athlete/Parent  
Handbook**

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# Introduction

This handbook describes the rules, policies, procedures, and framework within which the Seneca Valley Athletic Department functions. The content should be carefully reviewed by both the prospective student-athlete and his or her parents/guardians. By signing the parent/student athletic contract you are agreeing that this information has been reviewed and understood by both parent/guardian and student athlete.

## Athletic Programs

This section of the handbook contains Seneca Valley supplemental information rules and consequences related to participation, chronic tardiness, **unexcused absences** and improper behavior.

The Athletic Department of Seneca Valley High School consists of the following sports and activities. Every student should have an opportunity to become involved in the athletic program; if not as an athlete than as a manager or a media specialist.

### Fall

Cheerleaders (Co-ed V and JV)  
Cross Country (Co-ed)  
Field Hockey (Girls V and JV)  
Football (Boys V and JV)  
Golf (Coed)  
Pompons (Girls)  
Soccer (Boys V and JV)  
Soccer (Girls V and JV)  
Corollary Team Handball (Co-Ed)  
Volleyball (Girls V and JV)

### Winter

Basketball (Boys V and JV)  
Basketball (Girls V and JV)  
Cheerleading (Co-ed V)  
Indoor Track (Co-ed)  
Pompons (Girls)  
Swimming/Diving (Co-ed)  
Wrestling (Boys V and JV)  
Unified Bocce Ball (Co-Ed)

### Spring

Baseball (Boys V and JV)  
Allied Softball (Co-Ed)  
Lacrosse (Boys V and JV)  
Lacrosse (Girls V and JV)  
Softball (Girls V and JV)  
Tennis (Boys)  
Track and Field (Co-ed)  
Volleyball (Boys)  
Volleyball (Co-ed)  
Tennis (Girls)



# Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics supplement and support the academic mission of the school system and assist students in their growth and development. Athletics assists in promoting the importance of teamwork, effort, goals, and commitment. SVHS prides itself on an education based athletic philosophy in which academic growth and success are the number one priority. Interscholastic athletics is highly competitive, but winning is not the primary measure of success. Sportsmanship, respect for participants, and dignity in the face of adversity are more important than the outcome of the contest. All athletes do not perform at the same level, but all can demonstrate effort, dedication, and fair play.

# Sportsmanship

An important mission of the interscholastic athletics program is to teach and reinforce values relating to sportsmanship, competition, and fair play. It is expected that team personnel, parents, and spectators respect this mission by exhibiting appropriate behavior at athletic events. Countywide team and school awards are presented annually to schools whose coaches, players, and fans, demonstrate a high degree of sportsmanship.

# Student Eligibility Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements to be eligible to participate. Participation of ineligible students shall result in individual and team sanctions, including forfeits for the team.

1. All participants are required to have a valid annual medical evaluation.
2. **Students must submit a current MCPS Health Inventory Form (MCPS Form SRS-8), and register online via the mymcps parental portal <https://portal.mcpsmd.org/public/>**
3. Students must achieve a minimum 2.0 grade point average for the most recently completed marking period, with no more than one failing grade. Academic eligibility is determined on the date report cards are issued, and remains until the next report card is issued.
4. **Students must attend ALL of their scheduled classes in order to participate in a practice or contest on that day.** If the principal or designee grants an **excused absence in advance for a prescheduled activity**, or an unforeseen emergency, the student may participate on that day.
5. If during the season a student has an unexcused absence, he/she may not compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.
6. In addition to other infractions, a **student may be suspended or removed from a team for unexcused absences or chronic tardiness to classes or team practices. Student Athletes are allowed two tardies per week- the third leads to a game suspension.**
7. Students who are **19** years old, or older, as of **August 31** of the current school year are ineligible.
8. Students may not participate in more than one interscholastic sport in one season.
9. A student may not participate when he/she is serving an in-school or out-of-school suspension. The student becomes eligible to participate on the next school day following the suspension.
10. A student who is ineligible for any season may not try-out, practice, or play during the period of ineligibility
11. Students must satisfy school and school system Participation Standards.
12. Students whose legal residence is outside the designated boundary of a particular school may not participate unless they have received an official transfer and an athletic waiver.
13. Students and their parents **must register online and e-sign** the school *Student-Parent Athletic Participation Contract and Parent Permission* form.
14. Students should refer to *A Student's Guide to Rights and Responsibilities* for additional guidelines and regulations related to eligibility.

# Academic Standing

The following guidelines apply regarding a student's academic eligibility to compete.

- \* Students who have a 2.0 average with no more than one "E" in the previous marking period will automatically be eligible to participate or practice in any extracurricular activity governed by this regulation during the next marking period.
- \* A multi-hour course is considered one subject. When computing the marking period grade average, the multi-hour course grade will be counted once for each hour the course is offered; for example, if the course is a three-period course, the grade should be counted three times in determining the nine-week grade average. However, the letter grade for a multi-hour course will only be counted once.
- \* A grade of **NC** shall be considered failing.
- \* A student may regain his/her eligibility status at **the start of the next marking period** if all failing grades are reduced to a minimum of one E or NC and if a 2.0 or higher average is achieved.
- \* Grades recorded as "incomplete" as a result of legally excused absences **shall be considered passing** until changed. **Incomplete grades that are not changed to a passing grade within ten school days after report cards are issued will be considered failing grades for eligibility purposes until they are changed.**
- \* A marking period begins on the day that a report card is issued and continues until the day that the next report card is issued.
- \* Students taking a minimum of one to two courses must pass each course and maintain a 2.0 average to be eligible.
- \* Senior high school students who do not maintain a 2.0 average with no more than one "E" (failure) in the final quarter will not be eligible in the fall. Students may repeat failed courses in summer school; however, if a failed course is not offered during the summer session, the student will be allowed to take another course in the same subject area, if available. If not available, the student and his/her counselor will decide on the course and/or subject area. The summer-session grade will replace the lowest course grade from the previous marking period and be factored in to determine the 2.0 minimum average for participation.

## Exceptions

Failing grades from the final marking period of the previous year do not count towards ineligibility for the first marking period of the next year if the failing grades occurred when the student:

- a. was in the 7th or 8th grade
- b. was in a school **outside** of MCPS

Special Note: If a student only has one failing grade in the fourth grading period and has a 2.0 or higher grade point average for the fourth nine weeks and enrolls in the summer session for remedial or additional course work and fails the summer session, the student **is eligible** for participation in the fall.

- More specific information can be obtained within the *High school athletics handbook*

## Assumption of Risk

Participation in interscholastic athletic activities often includes intense competition and poses the potential for serious, catastrophic, or life-threatening injury. Participants and parents are urged to consider that there are inherent risks and hazards associated with athletic participation. Risks vary from sport-to-sport and can occur under direct supervision and with use of proper safety equipment.

## Hazing

Hazing is prohibited at all times. Hazing involves any act that subjects teammates to mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. In some instances hazing constitutes a criminal act. At a minimum, hazing may lead to immediate dismissal from a team.

Please report what you see. Tell a coach/admin or parent/guardian if you witness or are concerned that hazing may be taking place

## Communication with Coaches

Parents should not attempt to address coaches immediately after games and practices. Coaches have many post game/practice responsibilities, including supervision of players. Also, the post game/practice period is often emotionally charged, and not conducive to productive discussion. If a parent feels a need to communicate a concern, the parent should contact the coach and/or athletic director to arrange a later meeting.

## Residency

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) residency regulations require that students attend specific high schools, assigned by the school system, based on their legal residence. When a student participates at a school to which he or she is not assigned, or the home address of the student is not his or her legal residence, the student is not eligible to participate unless the student has received an official transfer, based on accurate information, and has received an athletic waiver from the Director of System-wide Athletics.

## Illegal Substances/Alcohol/Tobacco/Steroids/Controlled Substances

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and controlled dangerous substances, including steroids, is an extremely serious health issue. Such use places the quality of life for the student-athlete in jeopardy. Also at issue is the interdependency of team members and coaches, which requires that all student-athletes be mentally and physically prepared to give their best effort. If the student-athlete is using alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs not prescribed by a physician, he/she is placing himself/herself in serious jeopardy. If use, distribution, or possession of these substances by a student-athlete on school property **or at a school-sanctioned event is verified**, he/she may be suspended from the team for up to **30 calendar days**. Upon verification of a second violation, the **student-athlete may receive up to a 12-month ban on participation in an extracurricular athletic event from the date of the initial suspension**. Suspension from a team for the remainder of the season includes the stipulation that no letter awards will be given to the suspended student.

## School Attendance

- \* Unexcused absences or chronic tardiness to class or team practice may be sufficient reason for declaring a student ineligible at any time. The coach, in consultation with the athletic director and grade-level administrator, will determine the date and time of ineligibility. (Students are permitted two tardies to class per week. Anything more is a game suspension.
- \* In order to participate in any athletic event or practice, **athletes are expected to be in all of their scheduled classes the day of the event**. The principal, grade-level administrator, or athletic director may excuse an athlete for prescheduled appointments, such as a driver's test, a court appearance, medical appointments, or unforeseen emergencies.
- \* **A student who has any absence other than those specified may not practice or compete on that date**. A student who violates the above or otherwise misses class due to an unexcused absence will not be allowed to compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.



## Arriving late or missing practice

Prompt, regular attendance at practice sessions is necessary for the safety and conditioning of the student as well as for the benefit of the team. Team members **should notify their coach prior to any practice that they must miss** and should offer an adequate explanation for the absence. Chronic tardiness to practice or unexcused absences will be dealt with by the coach, and unless the coach specifies otherwise, the measures taken will be as follows:

**1st Offense-** Conference between coach and team member where coach determined appropriate action to make up for lost practice session

**2nd Offense-** Suspension from next practice session or contest

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense-** Dismissal from team

## Equipment and Responsibility for proper care

Most uniforms and equipment are assigned to student-athletes strictly on a loan basis for the duration of the sport season. It is the **responsibility** of the student-athlete to maintain that equipment/uniform in the same condition in which it was received. Any damage or loss of equipment/uniform will be considered the direct financial responsibility of the student-athlete responsible for its care.

**Any athlete withholding property from one sport is suspended from participating in any other sport until the equipment is returned.**

Student-athletes will be charged the replacement cost of any equipment or uniform not returned. This cost must be paid before participating in any other sport. Financial obligations must be settled with the business administrator

## Obligations

Any student with a financial obligation **will not be allowed** to participate in any extracurricular activity until athletic obligation is satisfied.

## Participation on Outside Teams

The MPSSAA is very specific on this issue. Students, while participating on a school team, are permitted to participate in the same sport outside of school during the sport season. Such participation must meet the following criteria:

1. The outside participation **may not conflict** with the sports schedule of the school, including district, regional and state championship play. (Sports schedule includes games and practices.)
2. A student who elects to participate on an outside team and does not participate on the school team during the designated sport's season is ineligible to represent his/her school in all meets and games that determine a county, district, regional, or state championship. (ie. Swimming)

## Inclement weather procedures

MCPS states that in the event schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions, all after-school activities are automatically canceled. These after-school activities include practices, contests, meetings, or other events. Team members should make certain to contact their coach regarding interim or adjusted practice schedules.

## Insurance

Each year the Board of Education makes available a Student Accident Policy at a nominal premium. This insurance is secondary to the family's own insurance. Information about this insurance is available by going to:

[https://www.hsri.com/K12\\_Enrollment/Main/default.asp](https://www.hsri.com/K12_Enrollment/Main/default.asp)

# Physical Education participation

Athletes should not expect preferential treatment. Any student who has enrolled in physical education class will **be expected to dress and participate in the daily activity**. On the day of a contest, his/her participation may be limited if permission is granted by the teacher.

## Requirements for Participation

Prior to a student's participation in any tryout, practice, or contest with a team, he/she must **register online**- and complete the following

- \* Current medical evaluation form properly completed by a physician/nurse practitioner. (Good for one year only) (SR-8) available at [www.svhsathletics.org](http://www.svhsathletics.org)

All students who are candidates for participation in interscholastic athletics are required to have an annual medical evaluation. If a student has a medical evaluation on file from a previous sport or activity, it will be applicable as long as twelve months have not elapsed since the evaluation was completed. The medical evaluation must cover the entire season; thus, the twelve months must not elapse until the season is concluded.

## Transportation

Some teams are transported to contests by MCPS busses while others are driven by coaches, parents, or other players. **Parents/guardians must identify during registration granting their child permission to attend contests in the manner checked on the form.**

All athletes on teams that take busses are expected to return to the school on the bus unless the coach determines that the student can return with his/her parents and written approval is given. Similarly, students who are driven to contests must have the approval of their coach if alternative means of return travel is arranged. At all times, the coach has the final decision on how a player can return from away events!

## Participation Standards

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege. Accordingly, students must meet certain standards to earn the privilege of participation. Failure to follow rules will lead to participation consequences.

1. **Exhibit public behavior that will reflect positively on the team, school, and community.** Display appropriate conduct and sportsmanship at all times throughout the season, both on and off the fields, courts and track. Violations might include, though are not limited to, fighting, theft, use of improper language and misuse of school facilities and equipment.
2. **Exhibit responsible, respectful, and trustworthy behavior to teammates and the coach.** Treat others as you would want to be treated. Hazing is prohibited at all times. Also respect the property of others at all times, in the locker rooms, both on and off the fields, courts and track. While academic eligibility rules to participate are defined by report card marking period grades, student-athletes may receive reduced participation if classroom grades slip during the marking periods.
3. **Exert efforts to maintain a high level of academic achievement.** Participation on an athletic team and squad is defined by the marking period grades. Coaches may reduce participation based on ongoing class grades during a marking period.
4. **Comply with all team, school, and school system rules, regulations, and policies.** Consequences for breaking school and school system rules, regulations and polices also lead to athletic participation consequences. The specific details of some team rules may vary from team to team depending on expectations in one area or another. However the basics related to being at practice on time, respect, proper behavior and sportsmanship as defined in the general rules sited on this sheet apply to all student-athletes on any team or squad.
5. **Exhibit appropriate behavior at all team and school-related activities.** Your behavior and conduct at any event whether it is home or away reflects on the entire team, the Athletic Department, and the school, and contributes to our overall image and success.



6. **Attend all team functions unless ill or given prior permission to be absent by the coach.** Prompt and regular attendance at practice sessions is necessary for the safety and conditioning of the student-athlete as well as for the benefit of the team. There are participation consequences for being absent or tardy.
7. **Respect and comply with decisions made by the coach and athletic department.** These decisions are based on activities that affect the entire team, athletic program and school, governed by school, county or state rules.
8. **Respect calls and decisions made by game officials.** Communicating with officials is reserved only to coaches. Under specified situations, defined by the head coach, communication with an official may be performed by a specified individual on the field. If this is the case the official will be notified of the individual prior to the start of the contest.
9. **Display good sportsmanship at all times.** This applies at any event whether home or away, in the locker room and both on and off the fields, courts and track. Countywide team and school awards are presented to schools, whose coaches, players and fans demonstrate a high degree of sportsmanship.
10. **Report to the coach any issues or developments that may affect eligibility status.** If an ineligible student-athlete participates in a contest the school automatically forfeits the contest if the team wins. This is a state rule.

## Consequences for Improper Behavior

Seneca Valley athletes and team members will be expected to display appropriate conduct and sportsmanship at all times throughout the season, both on and off the field. Specific violations might include, though are not limited to, items listed in the above participation standards, fighting, theft, use of improper language and misuse of school facilities and equipment. Also any athlete who acts or speaks in a derogatory way on a personal website will be held to the same conduct standards as if acting in person. The conduct of individual athletes reflects on the entire team, the Athletic Department, and the school, and contributes to our overall image and success.

Unless the school specifies otherwise, the following measures will be taken for inappropriate behavior and conduct.

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense - conference between coach and team member where coach determines appropriate level of action.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense - minimum suspension from next session or contest.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense - dismissal from team.



# Handbook for Parents of Athletes

Being a parent is challenging; this effort and responsibility is frequently complicated by being a parent of an athlete. This handbook, with its guidelines and suggestions, will give you some insights into this responsibility.

## The Player-Coach Relationship:

Unfortunately, through televised games and the more recent proliferation of cable TV, many adults feel that they understand or perhaps know more than many coaches. Everyone becomes an expert. This newfound expertise may heighten your appreciation of a sport, as a parent; however, you are not the coach.

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Unfortunately, a parent can have a pronounced effect on this very important and delicate relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have a distinct effect upon your child.

If you express a negative opinion in the presence of your child, you need to remember that he or she will return to practice the next day and may carry with him or her your convictions. Your son or daughter will then have to interact with this coach. You, as the parent, can greatly affect this delicate relationship.

Receiving technical or strategic instruction at home may interfere and conflict with the instructional process at practice sessions and games. This may ultimately impede your son or daughter's progress and affect his or her playing time or even winning a starting position.

## The Parent-Coach Relationship:

In your role as a parent, you obviously love and are concerned about your child's welfare. You want the best for him or her. But an athlete can have only one coach. Allowing the coach to instruct and guide the team is crucial in many respects.

Should you have any questions or concerns, do not approach the coach immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At this time, coaches have other responsibilities and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous and logical manner.

One of the responsibilities which a coach has at the conclusion of a contest is to have a brief meeting with his or her players. Athletes should not pause to talk to parents or friends immediately after games. These brief meetings are essential to the learning process involved in athletics.

## The Parent-Player

Some parents may try to live through their child's athletic efforts. Being positive and supportive is important, but adding pressure and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful. **Allow your son or daughter to enjoy and grow from this valuable experience. In numerous national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.**

When you do speak with your child after a contest, don't dwell on his or her play, how many points they scored or if they started. Instead, first ask how the team did? Did your son or daughter play hard, give 100% and have a good experience?

## Relationship with Officials

There is an age-old refrain often used by irate fans. "How much are you paying the officials?" The home school does not get the officials. The commissioner of the particular sport assigns all officials and neither team controls of which officials are assigned.

Officials agree to and follow a code of ethics. They really do not care or have a vested interest in which team emerges as the victor. It is also important to understand that they are a very necessary part of a game. A contest cannot be played without them.

So while you may not agree with all of their calls, (who does?), please do not harass and taunt them. It is also important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

## **Spectator-Cheerleader**

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. Taking this responsibility into your own hands is not appropriate. **Fans that leave the stands to direct cheers may often cause or lead to confrontations with the opponents.** Following the cheerleaders' directions, therefore, is absolutely necessary at all athletic contests.

The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect of the event.



### **Core Values (RAISE)**

Respect & Sportsmanship  
Academic Excellence  
Integrity & Character  
Spirited & Safe Competition  
Equity & Access

### **Vision**

We promote academic achievement, athletic excellence, positive sportsmanship, and upstanding citizenship by providing the greatest education-based interscholastic athletics program.

### **Mission**

Every student will attain the mental, moral, physical, and social-emotional skills to excel in the classroom, community, and the realm of competition.

### **Purpose**

To provide an innovative education-based interscholastic athletics program that maximizes diverse participation through a commitment to equity and access.

## **Expectations for Spectator Behavior**

Applaud players for their efforts  
Accept the decisions of officials  
Appreciate participants for their commitment  
Support school personnel in conducting an orderly and spirited contest  
Maintain composure when things seem to go against your team  
Respect the rights of other spectators  
Reward sportsmanlike behavior through cheering  
Focus attention on positive aspects of competition  
Encourage players by showing enthusiasm and positive recognition  
Demonstrate concern for the safety and welfare of athletes

### **Remember**

These young men and ladies are students and not professional athletes. They will make errors in the course of competition, as will game officials and coaches. However, all participants are trying their best. Negative criticism and booing will not help

them to improve and are unacceptable forms of expression at his event. You can assist in their development as athletes by focusing attention on the positive aspects of their performance. Your cooperation is important and is appreciated.

## **AT SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

In addition to embracing and committing to the MCPS Philosophy, at Seneca Valley High School, we will also encourage and promote:

- **The belief that athletes should participate in multiple sports and not specialize in any one specific sport.**
- The concept of the broadest-based participation possible by offering all of the teams which we can, and extending the opportunity to participate to as many students as possible.
- The premise that all teams are considered vital for our student-athletes and each is a valued part of our athletic program. **No one sport is considered more important than any other.**
- The approach that all teams are treated as fairly as possible.

### **Athletic Chain of Command**

At Seneca Valley High School, the following chain of command is in effect:

Principal  
Assistant Principal  
Athletic Director  
Head Coach  
Assistant/JV Coaches  
Players

If there are any questions or concerns involving some aspect of our athletic program, the athletes should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she would then go to the head coach, etc.

### **Expressing Concerns**

When expressing an occasional concern with a coach, please refer to and use the following guidelines:

1. **Never approach a coach immediately after a contest.** This is not the proper time or place for a discussion concerning your child or the team.
2. Call the following day and make an appointment which is convenient for both you and the coach to meet.
3. Raise your concern in a calm and civil manner. Yelling, being rude or using foul language is totally unacceptable.
4. Once you have stated your question or concern, listen to the explanation. Often a parent may be blinded by emotion and this overrides logic and reason. Listening receptively may really help you to understand any explanation which is given.

### **Sportsmanship**

Since athletics should be educational in nature, it is important that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and students. Sportsmanship is an overt display of respect for the rules of sport and for all others. It also involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. This means:

1. There can be no vulgar or inappropriate language from our fans or spectators.
2. Taunting or trash talking of our opponents and their cheerleaders cannot be tolerated.
3. Spectators cannot leave the bleachers or enter onto the court or field during a contest.
4. Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.
5. We should not impede or interfere with our opponent's cheerleaders from leading their cheers.
6. In some specific sports such as basketball and volleyball, we should not yell at an opponent during a foul shot or as a player attempts to serve.

7. School officials have the authority to remove a spectator (s) from a contest for unruly or improper conduct. The individual (s) may be removed for the duration of a particular contest or for any extended period of time depending on the severity or frequency of the improper conduct.
8. Possession of intoxicants and/or illegal substances is prohibited. Smoking is also prohibited on MCPS school ground.

### **Acceptable Behavior**

- a. Applaud during the introduction of players, coaches and officials
- b. Recognize a player's performance who has fouled out with applause from both sets of fans and with a hand shake from opponents.
- c. Accept all decisions of officials.
- d. Shake hands at end of contest between participants and coaches regardless of the outcome.
- e. Treat the competition as a game and not a war.
- f. Search out and congratulate opposing coaches and players.
- g. Show concern for an injured player regardless of which team he or she plays for.
- h. Encourage only sportsmanlike conduct which includes class, dignity and respect.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

- a. Yelling or waving arms during opponent's free-throw attempts.
- b. Performing disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.
- c. Booing or heckling an official's decision.
- d. Criticizing officials in any way; displays of temper with an official's call.
- e. Yelling anything that might antagonize the opponents.
- f. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
- g. Blaming loss of game on official, coaches, or participants.
- h. Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent.
- i. Using profanity or displays of anger that draws attention away from the game.
- j. Performing your own cheers instead of following lead of the cheerleaders.

### **Sportsmanship Award**

MCPS will present Sportsmanship Awards in each sport to varsity teams whose spectators and team personnel best exhibit sportsmanship over the course of the season. The award will be based on ratings conducted by officials, athletic directors, and school administrators. A detailed summary of criteria for the Sportsmanship Award is provided to athletic directors.

The schools whose teams have won the greatest number of team sportsmanship awards in the course of the year will be recognized as the county "Sportsmanship Champion" for that year and will receive a monetary award.



# Seneca Valley High School Athletics

## Responsibilities of an Athlete

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. The team's goals, welfare and success must come before any individual.
2. An athlete needs to consistently attend practice sessions. This also includes weekend and holiday periods.
3. Players must be receptive to coaching.
4. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
5. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but also the coaching staff, school and community.
6. If injured, an athlete must report all injuries to the coach.

## Responsibilities the of a Coach

At Seneca Valley High School, a coach has the responsibility for the following:

1. The selection of the squad.
2. The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
3. The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
4. The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
5. The decision of who plays in what position.
6. The establishing of team rules.
7. The selection of team captains.
8. The establishing of the requirements to earn a letter.
9. The communication with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held, and when the sessions will start and finish.

## Participation and Selecting the Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team at **Seneca Valley High School is a privilege and not a right**. Being on and maintaining one's membership on a team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. However, unlike recreation or intramural teams, equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist. In an effort to win, a coach will use players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at that time.

Every coach has the responsibility and authority for selecting his or her team. The criteria for selecting the team are developed by the coach. A copy of the written criteria is included in the extracurricular activities requirement form that must be signed and turned into the coach prior to tryouts.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees. Players from the previous year's JV team, for example, do not automatically make either the JV or varsity squad the following year. Having been a member of a team during the previous year or even being a senior does not ensure that an athlete will make the squad.

Parents should expect that every candidate will be treated fairly and given every consideration. Coaches are sensitive to feelings of disappointment, will handle the task as positively as possible, and will be available to answer athletes' questions.

While we understand that being cut is disappointing for many athletes and even for their parents, we unfortunately cannot keep everyone. Anyone cut from a team is welcome to tryout again next season or to try another sport. When parents and athletes understand and support the coach's decision, this difficult process becomes a less painful experience for all.

## The Purpose of a JV Team

JV Teams exist to provide those athletes who are unable to participate on the varsity squad an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience. While the athlete's age, size, or skill level may be the limiting factor in not making the varsity team, participation on a JV team may enhance the athlete's potential to make the varsity squad in the future.

A caution, however, must also be given. Being a member of a JV team does not guarantee that an athlete will automatically move up the following year to the varsity squad. The athletes best suited for varsity competition will make the squad each year.

Striving to win is important in athletics. However, compiling a great record or winning a championship should not be the primary objective of a JV team. The development of athletes should be the ultimate purpose of a JV squad, while at the same time acknowledging the value of winning, learning, and enjoying being a member of a team.

## Practice Sessions and Games

Practice sessions are normally closed to spectators and there is a very sound reason for this. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference to an athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting cannot be compromised.

At Seneca Valley High School, practice sessions:

1. May last two hours (though AD can grant up to 3 hours on certain days)
2. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of our facilities. (Check with the coach for the specific times.)
3. Will not be held when school is dismissed early due to inclement weather.
4. Will not be held when school is not in session due to inclement weather.
5. May be held on Saturdays and over holiday periods.

Spectators at games, however, are very much encouraged. Positive and nurturing support of teams and athletes can be very helpful to performance in athletic contests.

## Athletic Awards

Coaches determine the requirements for the following awards at Seneca Valley High:

### Varsity Teams

Letter (**One per entire high school career**)  
Sport pin and Participation Bar  
Manager pin  
Captain pin  
Varsity certificate  
Minds in Motion 3.25 certificate

### JV Teams

JV certificate  
Minds in Motion 3.25 certificate

## Team Captains and Managers

There are several good reasons for having captains of a team. These athletes may serve as positive role models, links between the team and the coach, and they certainly should be leaders. A good captain can be a real asset to the team and coaching staff.

While some coaches may allow their team to select captains, **the ultimate responsibility lies with the coach**. It is also important to understand that serving in the capacity of a captain is not reserved solely for seniors on a team, but rather this position is for the athlete who is best suited to filling the responsibilities.

**Managers perform duties assigned by the coach and will once again be allowed to earn ssl hours- up to 25 per season**

## Booster Club

Seneca Valley High School's Booster Club exists to support all Seneca Valley programs. Our Booster Club has three primary goals: To raise funds to assist school programs, to increase school spirit and to encourage and promote good sportsmanship.

The Booster Club is not a vehicle to remove coaches, advance vested interests or to alter Athletic Department policy. It is a service and support organization, which works in harmony with Seneca Valley High School and its athletic program.

The athletic director serves as the liaison between the club and the school. He also serves as the advisor to the club. **All requests for purchases come through the director of athletics who determines their priority.** Consideration of requests is given to the budget, strategic plans and an overriding belief that any purchase should help the total athletic program and not a single team. **No individual coach or team should directly approach the Booster Club without working with the athletic director.**

## Web Page

Seneca Valley High School has its own web page [www.svhsathletics.org](http://www.svhsathletics.org)

- The site includes but is not limited to; coaches bios, scores, schedules, rosters, pictures, contact info

## E-Mail and Websites

The Seneca Valley High School athletic department has adopted the following policy regarding the use of e-mail messages, websites, blogs, or other electronic communication:

"The use of e-mail messages, blogs, websites, or other electronic communications to make inflammatory or derogatory comments, and/or inappropriate descriptions or pictures regarding another team member, another student, a coach, another school or team, or other staff member is prohibited. For the purposes of this policy, inappropriate comments may include, but are not limited to, inappropriate comments/pictures/descriptions regarding another person's race, ethnic background, culture, religion, gender, or sexual orientation."

**Possible consequences for violating this policy are: (1) Single game suspension; (2) Multiple game suspension; (3) Dismissal from the team.**

## Dismissal From or Quitting the Team

Once a student begins participating in a sport and his/her squad membership is terminated for rule violations or because the student-athlete has quit the team, he/she is ineligible to participate in any other sport during that season unless he/she is given prior approval by the athletic director and/or the school administration.

## Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use

The use, distribution, or possession of alcohol, tobacco, and controlled, dangerous substances, including steroids, is an extremely serious health issue. The use of these substances may seriously impact the health of the user. MCPS athletic regulations state that any student-athlete with verified use on school property or at a school-sanctioned event will receive:

1<sup>st</sup> Offense-if the student is verified to be in possession or use of illegal substances, the student may be suspended from extracurricular athletic activities for up to 30 calendar days.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense-if the student is verified to be in possession or use of illegal substances a second time, the student may receive up to a 12-month ban on participation in an extracurricular athletic event from the date of the initial suspension.

In all cases, the student will have the right of appeal as outlined in the STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK.



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# ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDELINES