

# A Parental Guide to Sportsmanship

This information is designed to assist member schools in their efforts to work with parents to evaluate their attitudes about their son's and daughter's participation in education-based athletics and put them in proper perspective. By doing this, parents can better understand and support the sportsmanship initiatives, guidelines and expectations prescribed by the member schools of the WIAA.

## Role of the Parents

As a parent and role model for your child and student-athlete, you have a significant influence on the education and personal growth of your son or daughter.

Whether you realize it or not, the support and environment at home, as well as your conduct at interscholastic activities, assists your child to accept the opportunities and challenges presented in the classroom and during athletic competition with confidence and character.

With assistance from the school and community environment, it is your obligation as a parent to nurture and educate your son or daughter and equip them with the



knowledge, wisdom and inner strength to succeed in their lifelong endeavors.

That includes setting an appropriate example of how to react under pressure and in stress-filled situations resulting in either positive outcomes or setbacks.

Your son's or daughter's participation in interscholastic athletics is testimony to your belief that high school activities provide benefits and

growth opportunities for all those who participate.

It is important to understand that participation in and attendance at interscholastic athletic activities are a privilege and not a Constitutional right.

## Be a Parent Leader

Your attitude and behavior has a major impact on your son's or daughter's outlook about academics, athletics and sportsmanship. The sportsmanship you practice will influence them now and throughout their lives.



Parents often take an active role in their son's or daughter's athletic participation. An active interest in their child's development and activities is commendable and encouraged, but when parental involvement becomes too demanding and critical, a child's enjoyment in participating is diminished.

A U.S. Department of Education report reveals the number one reason boys and girls participate in high school sports is to have fun. In addition, skill development

was actually considered a more important aspect of fun than winning, even among the best athletes.

The purpose of your involvement with your son's or daughter's participation in athletics should be for their well-being, not as an attempt to live vicariously through your child or to fulfill an unfulfilled dream of yours.

Parents in control of their emotions and attitudes toward their son's or daughter's participation and the circumstances involving that participation are considered ideal program supporters and leaders. Their good sportsmanship reveals character and self-discipline. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. That may be of no consequence to you, but your actions and behavior reflect back on your son or daughter participating and those associated with you.

## Expectations for Parents

Essential elements of character and ethics are embodied in sportsmanship principles, including loyalty, respect, modesty, honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, self-control and discipline, and good citizenship.

To be a supportive and valued parent fan, we ask you to review and abide by the following sportsmanship goals and guidelines.

- \* Realize that athletics is part of the educational experience, and the benefits of involvement go beyond results and standings.
- \* Encourage your son/daughter and other student-athletes to give their best effort, just as you would expect them to do in their classwork, with the realization others will often perform better or worse.
- \* Extend respect to all those involved with your child's participation in interscholastic activities including game officials, coaches, opposing team and opposing team supporters.
- \* Maintain your dignity under any circumstance. Participate in only positive cheers encouraging our teams, discourage cheers or outbursts that redirect that focus and confront those who engage in unsportsmanlike behavior.

## Are You A Good Sport?

Forget about peer pressure; forget about your own biases; and forget about what you have seen at other events.

No excuses. Nobody is responsible for your actions but you -- not the officials, not the coach, not the opponents or their fans, not even the weather. Nor is ignorance to what sportsmanship is an excuse, because we can define it for you now.

Good sportsmanship is viewed by the WIAA in conjunction with the National Federation as a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. The ideals of sportsmanship apply equally to all activity disciplines. Individuals, regardless of their role in activities, are expected to be aware of their influence on the behavior of others and model good sportsmanship.

A good sport is a true leader. As a parent of a student-athlete at our school, your sportsmanship goals and objectives must include:

- \* Athletics are part of the educational experience, and its benefits of participation and involvement go beyond the final score or outcome of a game.
- \* Encourage student-athletes to perform to the best of their abilities and efforts, just as we urge them with their classwork, realizing someone may turn in better or lesser performances.
- \* Participate in positive cheers that encourage our team, and discourage any actions that would redirect that focus in a negative or disrespecting nature to anyone.
- \* Learn, understand and respect the rules of the game, the officials who administer them and their decisions.
- \* Respect the efforts and tasks our coaches face as teachers; and support them as they work to educate our children.
- \* Respect our opponents and acknowledge them for striving to do their best with positive cheers or by simply refraining from any negative cheers, actions or disrespect toward them.
- \* Maintain a sense of dignity and character under all circumstances.
- \* Enjoy your son's or daughter's participation.



## Parental Oath of Sportsmanship

I agree to practice and promote good sportsmanship. I also agree that if I fail to abide by the following guidelines and goals, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but not limited to: verbal warning by school personnel, written warning, removal and/or suspension from game(s), or legal prosecution or action with record of incident kept on file.

- \* I will learn and understand the rules of the game and the policies of the conference and WIAA.
- \* I will be responsible for my actions and the actions of my guests as a positive role model for my student-athlete and will encourage sportsmanship by showing respect, courtesy and positive support for players, coaches, officials and all other spectators.
- \* I will demand an educational sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all high school events.
- \* I will not engage in any unsportsmanlike actions directed at any official, coach, player or other spectators to include booing, taunting, using profane or rude language or gestures.
- \* I will teach my child to play within the rules and resolve conflicts without resorting to violence or hostility. In addition, I will demand that he/she treat other players, coaches and officials with respect.
- \* I will put what is best for the athletes and team above my personal desires for my child to gain acclaim or win.
- \* I will compliment my child for playing fair and to the best of his/her ability.
- \* I will teach my child to perform to the best of his/her ability and, although winning is rewarding, it is not more important than the effort extended or the maintaining of one's dignity.
- \* I will not ridicule or yell at my child or other members of the team for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- \* I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will not question, discuss or confront coaches or officials at the competition site. I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- \* I will refrain from expressing my opinions on coaches' strategies, instruction and techniques during competition.
- \* I will discourage and attempt to assist school officials address any unsporting behaviors or actions by other parents that is contrary to the ideals of sportsmanship or that would endanger the health of all spectators and athletes.

In addition, I will accept and abide by the enforcement of all penalties for school athletic code violations imposed on my son/daughter for their failure to abide by the code.

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Parent/Guardian Signature(s)