

Forestville Central School District
Athletic Handbook
2017-2018



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Forestville Central School District

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I. The Forestville Athletic Program

A. Organization and Structure

The athletic program is one of several extra-curricular activities the Forestville Central School District offers to secondary students. This Handbook sets forth the District's philosophy on interscholastic athletics, establishes rules and standards for student-athlete conduct, and includes other information regarding the District's athletic program of which parents/guardians and students should be aware. In addition to familiarizing themselves with this document, parents/guardians are encouraged to attend any parent meetings held by coaches. In the event parents/guardians have questions regarding the District's athletic program or this Handbook, the Athletic Director can be contacted during work hours at 965-2711.

B. Philosophy and Goals

The nature of competitive sports dictates that a primary focus must be on the pursuit of excellence in very demanding situations. Competitive sports by their very nature include both mental and physical stress, concentration, self-sacrifice, hard work, joy, sorrow, elation, and disappointment. Sports are one place where a student-athlete cannot hide the results of one's efforts.

Competition can bring out the positive and sometimes, unfortunately, the negative human qualities of student-athletes. The sports experience should contribute to the overall education of each student-athlete with constant emphasis on the pursuit of excellence. The focus of the program at Forestville Central School has been, and will continue to be, the development of the will to excel. Winning is not as important as having the will to win.

Student-athletes do not always get the same amount of playing time. There will be times when a student-athlete may not get in a game or match, and there will be times when some student-athletes will only play for a short time.

There are those who feel that everyone should play equal amounts of time, but that is not going to be the case, particularly as a student-athlete rises toward Varsity levels of competition. Modified programs typically put more emphasis on trying to get every student-athlete into a game or match, but there are no set standards or guarantees in this area. Likewise, gifted student-athletes should be well aware that the role of the substitute is as important as the role of the starter, and there will be times when starters will be taken out of games and matches. Understanding and accepting these realities are parts of the self-sacrifice required to be a team member. Sometimes student-athletes will leave a team because "they aren't playing enough" or "someone doesn't like me." Student-athletes must work for what they get, since there are no shortcuts in athletics.

C. Modified Interscholastic Athletic Program

Interscholastic athletic competition for students in seventh and eighth grades, and between the ages of 12 and 14, has been modified by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). The program has been approved by the member schools and is based on several decades of experimentation and implementation, with safety as the overriding concern.

The Modified Program is designed as a means of enriching the competitive athletic program for younger boys and girls. The Modified Program is designed to offer student-athletes the opportunity to engage in a more highly competitive experience than is found in intramural/recreation programs, but not as involved as those found in Junior Varsity and Varsity interscholastic competition. A competitive program such as this may not always guarantee each student-athlete equal participation opportunities in contests.

D. Athletic Placement Process

The District permits exceptional seventh and eighth grade student-athletes to participate on Junior Varsity and Varsity teams, provided they have demonstrated they possess the requisite physical maturity, physical fitness, and sport skill to do so through completion of the Athletic Placement Process (APP). The APP has been designed for the

few student-athletes who would be served by playing on a higher level team than age and grade might normally indicate. It is expected that there will be only a few middle school student-athletes participating on high school interscholastic teams. Information must be collected and evaluated by the Athletic Director before a student-athlete can participate under this program. The APP will be conducted, and the student will be evaluated, consistent with any and all relevant requirements and guidelines established by the State Education Department, NYSPHSAA, and Section VI.

II. General Considerations for Athletics

A. Relationship to the Academic Program

Academics are the fundamental purpose of schools. Athletics, along with other extra-curricular programs, are secondary in importance to academics. Coaches and teachers need to work together to assist student-athletes in being successful in their academic classes. The eligibility rule for extra-curricular sports and activities is contained in the Forestville Central School Student Handbook.

B. General Regulations for Participation

Forestville Central School operates under the rules of the NYSPHSAA. The NYSPHSAA rules must be followed in all cases of eligibility, transfer, physical examinations, insurance coverage, starting dates, use of school equipment, and other categories covered by the NYSPHSAA regulations.

A student-athlete must be a bona fide student enrolled in at least four (4) core subjects including physical education.

A pupil shall be eligible for senior high school athletic competition in a sport during each of four consecutive seasons of such sport commencing with the pupil's entry into the ninth grade and prior to graduation, except as otherwise specified by the Commissioner Regulations.

In order to participate in interscholastic competition, a student-athlete must receive an approved physical examination by the Forestville Central School District physician (or the student-athlete's primary

physician) and may not practice or participate without this approval.

A student-athlete may be allowed to participate in more than one (1) sport at the same time in the same season. Dual sport student-athletes must sign a contract and place it on file with the Athletic Director.

Only uniforms authorized by the athletic department will be permitted to be worn for contests.

C. Attendance Related to Participation

Student-athletes are expected to attend all practice sessions. A student-athlete absent from school for illness may not practice, unless the student is fully recovered from his or her illness and a legal excuse is submitted prior to 12:00 pm. When a student-athlete is in school but cannot practice for a legitimate reason, the coach (or Athletic Director, if the coach is unavailable) must be informed prior to practice time. Practice time is critical. Unexcused tardiness to practice will not be tolerated. Practices are often scheduled on Saturdays and vacation days. There are no practices or games scheduled on Sundays, unless authorized by the Superintendent of Schools. Student-athletes should be aware that postponed athletic contests are usually rescheduled and played the next day.

A student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in any athletic contest or practice unless the student-athlete has been in school for attendance purposes the entire day, unless a legal excuse is submitted prior to 12:00 pm. Exceptions may be made for student-athletes with legal excuses. Student-athletes will sign in at the Nurse's Office upon arrival at school. Legal excuses must be presented to the nurse in writing. In case of a Saturday game or a game on a holiday, a student-athlete must have been in regular attendance on the last day of school before the game.

a. Legal Absences

1. Student illness, provided the student has fully recovered and furnished the District with an excuse
2. Serious illness or death in the family
3. Medical or dental appointments
4. Approved educational trips
5. Impassable roads or extreme conditions
6. Approved religious observances
7. Quarantine
8. Required court appearance
9. Preapproved college visits
10. Military obligations
11. Emergency situations as approved by the MS/HS Principal or Superintendent of Schools

2. Vacation

1. Vacations by student-athletes during a sport season are discouraged.
2. In the event an absence due to a vacation that is unavoidable, a student-athlete must:
 - i. Be accompanied by his/her parents or guardian while on vacation.
 - ii. Contact the head coach prior to the vacation.
 - iii. Be willing to assume the consequences related to his/her status on that team or squad as a starter, second string, third string, etc.

3. In-School Suspension

A student-athlete placed in I.S.S. (in-school suspension) for disciplinary reasons will be ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities for the duration of the suspension to include the last day served in ISS.

4. Out-of-School Suspension

A student-athlete placed in O.S.S. (out-of-school suspension) will not be allowed to practice or participate in contests during the period of suspension. In cases where athletic contests are not

scheduled during the suspension period, the student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled contest of the current sports season. Student-athletes, who are suspended from school on a Friday, shall not be eligible for a weekend/vacation contest.

D. Outside Team Rule

The NYSPHSAA allows for outside competition. Forestville Central School student-athletes must understand that commitment to the school team comes first, and outside competition should not be detrimental to a Forestville Central School team. There will be many circumstances where a student-athlete should not participate in an outside activity due to the possible effect on the Forestville Central School team. Student-athletes should not participate until they check with the individual coach in charge of the school team.

III. Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

A. Overview

Athletics are an important component of the District's educational program. This Student-Athlete Code of Conduct applies to student athletes from their first interscholastic participation through graduation. These rules are in effect from July 1 through June 30 of each school year, and apply to all student-athletes in grades seven through twelve.

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. Because of this, student-athletes are held to a higher standard. Students' participation in the District's athletic program is conditioned upon their adherence to the provisions of this Student-Athlete Code of Conduct.

Additionally, all rules and regulations of the MS/HS Student Handbook, District Code of Conduct, and District policy must also be followed. Failure to comply with the provisions of those documents may result in athletic consequences, including but not limited to being removed from an athletic team and/or being barred from further participation in interscholastic sports.

B. General Provisions

- i. A student-athlete that quits a team, or is suspended from participation because of rule infractions, shall not receive a letter or award for participation in that sport.
- ii. Acts deemed detrimental to the team athletic program, or the school district may result in disciplinary action and may result in suspension or dismissal from athletic participation.
- iii. A display of unsportsmanlike conduct by a student-athlete toward an opponent or official will result in disciplinary action by the head coach and may result in suspension or dismissal from athletic participation.
- iv. Any student-athlete who has committed an act of vandalism or theft, either at a Forestville school or at an opponent school while representing a Forestville team, may result in suspension or dismissal from athletic participation.
- v. Student-athletes are expressly prohibited from:
 - a. Possessing or consuming any tobacco product, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vapor products;
 - b. Possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages;
 - c. Possessing or consuming illegal drugs, including look-alike drugs and/or controlled substances that have not been prescribed to the student by a licensed physician;
 - d. Attending social functions where alcohol and/or tobacco are being used by minors or where controlled substances are being used unlawfully by anyone. The student-athlete must leave the site immediately upon learning that alcohol, tobacco, and/or controlled substances are being used.
- vi. Student athletes are required to abide by any and all team rules established by their coaches.

A student-athlete who violates any of the above rules may be subject to disciplinary action.

C. Individual Coach's Rules

The coach is responsible for all phases of the team. Student-athletes are expected to work within the guidelines of the coach. With approval from the Athletic Director, a coach of a sport team may set forth rules in writing which may be more stringent than those set forth in this handbook.

All student-athletes shall observe the following rules:

- a. Follow the instructions of the coach.
- b. Be present and on time for all practices and/or games.
- c. Participate in all academic classes.
- d. If an athlete should quit a team, he/she should not do so without first notifying the coach. He/she will not be allowed to participate in another sport during the same sport season unless authorized to do so by the athletic director after meeting with both coaches.

D. Responsibilities of the Student-Athlete

1. To cooperate with coaches, school authorities and teammates at all times.
2. To uphold and respect all rules of the school and team.
3. To strive for the highest degree of excellence.
4. To treat all officials and opponents with respect and dignity.
5. To accept victory and defeat with humility, grace, and good sportsmanship.
6. To follow training rules.
7. To place primary responsibility to the team, not to yourself. There is no "I" in TEAM.
8. To be understanding of and helpful to others on the team or other teams. To be a backer of all the Forestville teams.

E. Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by Forestville Central School District. This prohibition includes all forms of discrimination and harassment, including but not limited to sexual harassment, hazing, intimidation, and cyberbullying. In addition to facing discipline under the District's Code of Conduct, student-athletes who engage in such behavior

may face athletic consequences, including possible suspension from all athletic participation.

F. Due Process Procedures

The team coach, Athletic Director, MS/HS Principal and/or the Superintendent of Schools have the authority to enforce the district's Athletic Handbook. Such enforcement may include suspension, dismissal from a team or termination of the student-athlete's ability to participate in future athletics for violations of the Athletic Handbook and its Student-Athlete Code of Conduct, the District Code of Conduct, MS/HS Handbook, or District Policy.

Prior to the imposition of a penalty, the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have the opportunity to meet with the individual proposing the penalty and discuss any relevant underlying facts or circumstances. The penalty will tie into the seriousness of the infraction and will take into account the student-athlete's behavioral history.

G. Student-Athlete and Parent/Guardian Consent

All student-athletes and parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign the athletic consent form (see last page(s) of this handbook). By doing so, they agree to abide by all the rules in this handbook and understand it will remain in effect for the entire year. The athletic/parental consent form must be signed and returned to the coach before the student-athlete may begin practice.

IV. Travel Regulations

A. Standard Procedures

All student-athletes shall ride to and from games in vehicles provided by the district. All student-athletes are required to travel to and from an away athletic contest on the school bus provided by the District. Student-athletes cannot drive themselves or others to a competition or practice unless previously approved by the MS/HS Principal or the Athletic Director.

This is to be considered standard practice. There are times when it may be necessary for a parent to pick up a student-athlete after a game. This should be cleared with the coach prior to game time and a WRITTEN note to the coach from the parent of the student-athlete to be picked up will be required. This note will indicate who the responsible adult picking up the student-athlete will be. No student-athlete will be allowed to ride home with another parent/individual without prior approval. If the situation arises, the student-athlete must have written approval from MS/HS Principal or Athletic Director.

B. Bus Regulations

All student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a fashion that will ensure the safety of all passengers. Traveling to and from games should be no different than other times on the bus. All safety rules must be followed. All regulations are also in effect during charter trips.

V. Care of Equipment and Uniforms

A. Lost Equipment

All equipment issued by the school will be the responsibility of the individual student-athlete. Any equipment not returned at the end of the season must be paid for or replaced by the student-athlete. A student-athlete may not try out for another sport team until all equipment has been returned or paid for.

VI. Medical/Permission/Physical Exams/Insurance

A. Requirements

All student-athletes who desire to participate in interscholastic athletics must be approved by the Forestville Central School physician.

B. Athletic/Parent Consent Card and Emergency Medical Authorization Form

The coach will provide each student-athlete with a copy of each form. The student-athlete and the parent will completely fill out the cards, sign

each, and return them to the Athletic Director or MS/HS nurse before participation in any athletic practice.

C. Physical Examinations

It is the responsibility of each student-athlete to sign up with the MS/HS nurse prior to the sports season. The Athletic Director and/or MS/HS nurse will provide the student-athlete with the necessary forms to receive a physical exam.

The school nurse will notify student-athletes about the time of the physical exam appointment.

The student-athlete must bring the completed front side of the health history form signed by the parent/guardian.

a. Fall Sports Physicals

All student-athletes should get a physical exam in May or June for fall sport participation. Specific dates will be announced at the MS/HS. For those unable to obtain a spring physical, or new students in the district, a physical exam may be obtained through a primary physician. All records must be reported to the MS/HS nurse.

b. Winter Sports Physicals

Physical examinations will be offered in school prior to winter sports participation. Any student-athlete without a current physical may obtain one prior to start date with his/her primary physician. All records must be reported to the MS/HS nurse.

c. Spring Sports Physicals

Physical examinations will be offered in school prior to spring sports participation. Any student-athlete without a current physical may obtain one prior to start date with his/her primary physician. All records must be reported to FCS MS/HS nurse.

Note: Physical examinations are good for twelve (12) calendar months; however, prior to each season a health history form must be completed before the first practice.

D. Treatment of Athletic Injuries

The Forestville Central School coaches will render immediate first aid and provide sport injury emergency services for student-athletes injured during practices or games unless emergency medical service providers are on site to provide such services.

E. Accident Reports

All injuries should be reported to the coach immediately. Early care and treatment can minimize the physical restrictions from an injury. Student-athletes should give coaches all information so they can file the appropriate accident report. Injuries must be reported promptly.

F. Return to Competition After Injury

When a student-athlete receives an injury which requires medical treatment by a physician, the student-athlete must be re-qualified by the school physician or their own physician before returning to competition. This requirement is dictated by state law to prevent serious injury to the student-athlete from taking place. The MS/HS Nurse will need the original medical release from the physician in order to make arrangements for the re-qualification. Student-Athletes are not allowed to practice before the medical clearance form has been turned into to the MS/HS nurse.

VII. Awards

A. Special Honors

At the seasonal athletics awards ceremony, an MVP (most valuable player) and other selected awards may be presented to a student-athlete of each squad at the discretion of the head coach.

B. Varsity Letter Qualifications

A varsity letter is not the right of each individual on a team; rather it is an honor that must be earned by the individual student-athlete. The coach will determine who will receive a letter. The coach will set forth specific criteria outlining performance as a means of achieving a letter. The criteria set forth will give meaning to the recipients of letter awards.

VIII. Sportsmanship

A. Student-athletes and coaches are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship in all aspects of athletic competition. Consequently, students and coaches are prohibited from engaging in unsportsmanlike behavior, including but not limited to taunting, fighting, harassing, or intimidating others, or arguing with officials. Student-athletes and coaches who display such behavior will be subject to consequences (including but not limited to removal from the contest, a suspension from future contests, or removal from the team) under this Handbook, the District's Code of Conduct, and/or any applicable NYSPHSAA or Section VI rules.

Relevant provisions of the NYSPHSAA sportsmanship standards are provided below and can be accessed in their entirety online at: <http://www.nysphsaa.org/Portals/0/PDF/Handbook/2018-19%20Handbook/NYSPHSAA%20Handbook.pdf>. The District reserves the right to issue more severe penalties than are required by NYSPHSAA as circumstances warrant.

a. Coach:

1. Any coach excluded by a certified official from an interschool competition for unsportsmanlike conduct, including taunting, is ineligible to coach any interschool competition in that sport until after the next previously scheduled contest at the same level (e.g. Junior varsity, varsity, etc.) Has been completed. In individual sports, a multi-day contest is considered to be a contest. Disqualification from one season carries over to the next season of participation. The coach may not be present at the game site nor communicate in any manner during the contest with any person present at the site.

NOTE: "Not being physically present at the site" means a disqualified coach is not to be present in the locker room, on the sidelines, in the stands or site area before, during or after the game/meet. (See definitions)

Any coach that does not serve the penalty for violating the Sportsmanship Standard will be ineligible to participate in the next two regularly scheduled contests. If the coach continues to not serve the penalty, the matter will be referred to the Section for further action. If the coach is involved in the NYSPHSAA play-offs, the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of the NYSPHSAA.

Any coach:

1. Who receives a disqualification penalty in a sport shall not participate in the next regularly scheduled contest;
 2. Who receives a second disqualification penalty in the same sport in the same season shall not participate in the next two regularly scheduled contests; and
 3. Who receives a third disqualification penalty in the same sport in the same season will not be allowed to participate for the rest of the season (regular season or post schedule play), the Section Athletic Council will assess the penalty carrying over into the next season of participation.
 4. The Section Athletic Council will have the authority to extend the period of ineligibility in those cases where the actions of the individual that was disqualified from a contest or scrimmage are warranted. The period of ineligibility cannot exceed one year from the date of the disqualification.
2. A coach who strikes, shoves, kick or makes other physical contact with the intent to annoy, harass or intimidate another person (e.g. official, another coach, player, fan) shall be expelled immediately and banned from further participation or coaching in all sports for a period of time to be determined by the section not to exceed one year from the date of the offense.

b. Player:

1. Any member of a squad disqualified by a sport official for

unsportsmanlike conduct, including taunting, or for a flagrant foul shall not participate in that sport in the next previously scheduled contest with a member school or in NYSPHSAA tournament play. In individual sports, a multi-day contest is considered to be a contest. The contest in which the athlete was disqualified must count in the total maximum number of contests permitted. Disqualifications from one season carry over to the next season of participation. (See definitions section)

Any Player:

1. Who receives a disqualification penalty in a sport shall not participate in the next regularly scheduled contest;
 2. Who receives a second disqualification penalty in the same sport in the same season shall not participate in the next two regularly scheduled contests; and
 3. Who receives a third disqualification penalty in the same sport in the same season will not be allowed to participate for the rest of the season. If the third ejection takes place in the last contest of the season (regular season or post schedule play,) the Section Athletic Council will assess the penalty carrying over into the next season of participation.
 4. The Section Athletic Council will have the authority to extend the period of ineligibility in those cases where the actions of the individual that was disqualified from a contest or scrimmage are warranted. The period of ineligibility cannot exceed one year from the date of the disqualification.
2. Any member of the squad who strikes, shoves, kicks or makes other physical contact with the intent to annoy, harass or intimidate an official shall be expelled from the game immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for a period of time to be determined by the section not to exceed one year from the date of the offense. **NOTE:** Members of the squad includes player, manager, score keepers, timers, and statisticians.

B. Spectators

The team bench and team sideline areas are off limits to all parents, guardians, and spectators until the completion of the contest. Only authorized school personnel are permitted. (Ex. Statisticians, chain crew, scorekeepers, clock operators, media, unpaid coaching assistants, and managers.) Spectators at Forestville sporting events are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and refrain from engaging in any harassment, taunting, intimidation, bullying, or other mistreatment of officials, players, or coaches. The District reserves the right to remove any spectators from the contest for unsportsmanlike conduct or behavior.

XI. Officials

All officials are certified by New York State and are deemed to be competent. Officials are to be treated with respect at all times. Student-athletes, coaches, and spectators are prohibited from arguing with, intimidating, harassing, or otherwise mistreating officials.

XII. Press/Media Relations

Student-athletes will follow the guidelines of the individual sport coaches. Always be careful of making inappropriate statements. If there is any doubt about talking with reporters, consult your coach first.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Forestville Central School District does not discriminate in its employment and admission to programs and activities as applicable, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, veterans' status, political affiliation, domestic victim status, use of a guide dog, hearing dog or service dog, disability, or other classifications protected under federal or state law, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The designated district compliance officers will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of 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 Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, and the New York State Human Rights Law.

The Forestville Central School District Compliance Officers are: Superintendent, 12 Water Street, Forestville, NY 14062 (716) 965-6539, MS/HS Principal, 4 Academy Street, Forestville, NY 14062 (716) 965-2711, Elementary Principal, 12 Water Street, Forestville, NY 14062 (716) 965-2742. Complaints may also be filed with the Office for Civil Rights, New York Office, U.S. Department of Education, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005-2500, phone (646) 428-3800, fax (646) 428-3843, email: OCR.NewYork@ed.gov.