

IV. ATHLETIC PLEDGE

A. Overview

The purpose of the athletic program in the Forestville Central School District is to promote the physical, mental, social, emotional, and moral well being of the student participants. It is hoped that athletics in Forestville schools will be a positive force in preparing youth for an enriching and vital role in American life.

The athletic program at Forestville Central School is an important and integral part of the total school program and is open to participation by all enrolled students. Through voluntary participation, the athlete gives time, energy, and loyalty to the program. In order to contribute to the welfare of the group, the athlete must willingly assume these obligations and make the necessary sacrifices.

The purpose of the Athletic Pledge is to prevent and to deter unacceptable behavior and to promote uniformity and fair treatment of all athletes.

FORESTVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL ATHLETIC PLEDGE

The Athletic program at Forestville Central School is a voluntary program wherein students have the privilege of representing their school interscholastic competition. Along with this privilege, the student carries the responsibility of abiding by the following rules:

1. No use or possession of tobacco.
2. No use or possession of alcoholic beverage.
3. No use or possession of drugs unless prescribed by a physician.
4. No conduct which might be detrimental to the good image of Forestville Central School.
5. Abide by additional rules set by the coach of a specific sport relative to attendance at practices, proper diet, proper amount of sleep, etc.

PENALTY

Any coach or faculty member reporting a violation of rules 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 will submit a report of the alleged violation in writing to the Athletic Director as soon as possible. Any athlete reported violating Rules 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 will be granted a hearing with the coach, the accuser, and the Athletic Director. A written report of the hearing, along with the Athletic Director's decision will be kept on file.

If the athlete is found in violation of Rules 1, 2, or 3 he/she will be suspended from all athletic participation for a period of time determined by the Athletic

Director and High School Principal. A second violation by the same student will result in the student's suspension from ALL athletic participation for one calendar year from the date of the violation.

These penalty policies are in accordance with existing set district discipline policies.

APPEAL

If the accuser or the accused is dissatisfied with the Athletic Director's decision following the hearing, he/she may appeal the decision in writing to the High School Principal. The Principal's ruling on the appeal will be given within five (5) school days of the submission of the appeal.

AWARDS

Any student 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.

B. Regulations for Participation

1. Forestville Central School operates under the rules of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (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.
2. A contestant must be a bona fide student enrolled in at least four (4) subjects including physical education.
3. A student athlete shall be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition during eight (8) consecutive semesters upon entry into the ninth grade. A student athlete shall be eligible for only four (4) years in any one interscholastic sport unless advanced by the selective classification program.
4. A student athlete shall be eligible for inter-school competition in grades 9-10-11-12 until the last day of the school year in which he/she attains the age of 19.
5. Seventh or eighth ninth grade students between the ages of 12 to 15 may participate in the modified program (grades seven and eight). A student reaching the age of sixteen during a sports season may compete that season and must play varsity or junior varsity the next sports season.

6. In order to participate in interscholastic competition, a student must receive an approved physical examination by the Forestville Central School District physician and may not practice or participate without this approval.

7. Student athletes are expected to conduct themselves on and off school grounds in a manner that will bring credit to themselves, their school and their families. Any display of misconduct may result in suspension or dismissal from a sport team.

8. Acts deemed detrimental to the athletic program or the school district may result in disciplinary action and may result in suspension or dismissal from athletic participation.

9. A display of unsportsman-like 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.

10. Any 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 be suspended or dismissed from the team for the remainder of the sport season.

11. The athletic/parental consent form must be signed and returned to the coach before the student-athlete may begin practice. Any infraction of the training regulations will be subject to due process procedures outlined in the Athletic Pledge above.

12. When a student-athlete and parent/guardian sign the athletic consent form (see last page of this handbook), they agree to abide by all the rules on the card and in this handbook.

13. A student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in more than one (1) sport at the same time in the same season according to Forestville Central School District Board of Education policy.

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

15. 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. Exceptions may be made for student-athletes with legal excuses. Student-athletes will sign in at the Counselor's Office upon arrival at school. Legal

excuses must be presented to the athletic director 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.

Legal excuses to school accepted by New York State are:

- a. Sickness
- b. Sickness or death in family
- c. Impassable roads or weather conditions
- d. Religious observance Quarantine
- e. Quarantine
- f. Required to be in court
- g. Music lessons
- h. Attendance at health clinics and/or doctor or dental appts.
- i. Approved cooperative work programs
- j. Approved college visits
- k. Military obligations

16. A student-athlete who consistently breaks school rules may be suspended from extracurricular participation on a temporary or a permanent basis. Serious school-related misconduct may result in the student being temporarily or permanently suspended from athletic participation.

17. 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.

An athlete 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.

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

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

C. Vacation Policy

1. Vacations by athletic team members during a sport season are discouraged.
2. In the event an absence due to a vacation is unavoidable, an athlete must:
 - a. Be accompanied by his/her parents or guardian while on vacation.
 - b. Contact the head coach prior to the vacation.
 - c. Be willing to assume the consequences related to his/her status on that squad as a starter, second string, third string, etc.
3. Student-athletes not adhering to this procedure may be suspended or dismissed from the team.

D. Practice

Athletes are expected to attend all practice sessions. An athlete absent from school for illness may not practice. When an athlete is in school but cannot practice for legitimate reason, the coach (or athletic director if the coach is unavailable) must be informed prior to practice time. Practice time is critical. Tardiness to practice will not be tolerated. An athlete must practice at full speed in order to make improvement. Practices are often scheduled on Saturdays, Sundays, and vacation days. Student athletes should be aware that postponed athletic contests are usually rescheduled and played the next day. There are no practices or games scheduled on Sundays, unless authorized by the athletic director.

E. Due Process Procedures

All violations of the athletic code are subject to due process procedures.

Unless otherwise specified, a coach shall have the authority to bench a student athlete. The parents or guardians and the student shall be informed of the violation(s), and the parents or guardians and the student shall have the opportunity to meet with the coach and athletic director in an informal meeting.

If a disciplinary suspension is sought, the athletic director and principal shall notify the student-athlete and his/her parents or persons in guardian relationship to their right to a hearing. Such notice shall be given at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing.

The hearing shall be presided over by the athletic director and principal. The district shall first present any witnesses and/or other evidence it might have in support of the charges against the student-athlete. The student or his/her representative shall have the hear the nature of the charges against the athlete and have the right to present his/her own version of the incident involved. The student may call any witnesses or produce any evidence in support of his or her position. The district and the student and his or her representative also shall offer any comments or evidence concerning the appropriate penalty to be assessed if the athletic director and principal find that an athletic code violation has taken place.

Within seventy two (72) hours of the conclusion of the hearing, the athletic director and principal shall issue a written decision. A copy of the decision on the issues of whether or not the alleged code violation(s) occurred, and if the violation(s) occurred, the consequences will be provided to the student. The student and/or his or her representative shall have five (5) business days from the receipt of the decision to request a review by the superintendent of schools. It is understood that a student shall remain benched from an athletic team continuously from the initial determination throughout the appeal process.

F. 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. Leave the boasting to others and do not criticize officials, other schools, our school, players, or coaches.

G. Player/Coach Relationships

The coach is responsible for all phases of the program. Players are expected to work within the guidelines of the coach.

H. Officials

All officials are certified by New York State and are deemed to be competent. They are not perfect, but neither is any player. An official is to be treated with respect at all times whether we are home or away and whether you are a player or a spectator. There has never been a player who could officiate while they were playing. Many have tried, but the

result was their playing ability suffered. Remember that officials make fewer mistakes than players do. Officials are to be treated as guests when they are at our school.