

# **Worcester Preparatory School**

## **Athletic Department Student-Athlete Handbook**

The purpose of these guidelines is to give coaches, students and parents specific information concerning Worcester Preparatory School's athletic program. These guidelines cover information applicable to all teams at all levels of WPS athletics and is revised on a regular basis. In addition, coaches of each team will communicate important team rules and guidelines as well as each coach's general expectations, philosophies, and goals.

The goal of the WPS athletic department is that this information will make for not only a competitive sports experience but will also allow everyone to have fun and enjoy success. ***GO MALLARDS!***

### **Athletic Department Mission Statement**

At Worcester Preparatory School, athletics are a valuable part of the total educational experience. As an extension of the academic classroom and traditional school day, valuable lessons are learned through athletic participation. The objective is to foster an environment where young people reach their full intellectual, emotional, and physical potential. The values of teamwork, sportsmanship, fitness, and team camaraderie are vital to our mission.

### **Attendance and Expectations of the Worcester Prep's Athletic Department**

Students who choose to participate and are associated with any athletic program at WPS will be held to greater expectations, as they will be representing WPS on and off campus. Participation in athletics at WPS carries with it a unique privilege. Student-athletes must bear in mind that at all times they represent their coaches, teammates, families and WPS. We expect to send the message that they are part of a first-class athletics program and school community.

Attendance and effort is a must in order for all of our sports programs to keep up their strong tradition of success here at WPS. Students, while participating on a WPS team in any sport, are not permitted to miss a practice or a game in order to participate on a recreation, club or other organized team. Should there be a violation of this policy, disciplinary action will be taken. Excessive tardiness and/or absences could result in the removal from the team.

## **Academic Eligibility**

Students who participate in interscholastic sports must maintain passing grades in all major courses and achieve a minimum overall GPA of 76%. Students who are failing a major course or have a GPA below 76% will be placed on Academic Probation and will not be allowed to participate in interscholastic sports, participate in practices, or play in games. After a period of 20 school days following the determination dates, players on academic probation may be reinstated provided their grades qualify them to be taken off Academic Probation.

## **Athletic Transportation**

The Transportation of our teams demands care and attention to important details:

1. It is strongly encouraged, for the development of team spirit and player relationships, that all student-athletes travel together to and from away athletic contests. Parents may take their own student-athlete home from a game. Student-athletes may not ride home with other persons unless the student-athlete's **parent** have given explicit written permission to the coach prior to leaving the WPS campus.
2. When traveling to games west of Salisbury on Rt.50, student-athletes from the Salisbury area who drove to school that day, with a permission form signed by their parents, may follow behind the bus to Salisbury and leave their car in the McDonalds parking lot located off of Tilghman Rd. That student-athlete will then board the bus for the remainder of the away trip. Upon returning to the Salisbury area, the student-athlete will be dropped off at McDonalds in order to pick up his/her car. The student-athlete may NOT transport any teammates (unless there are siblings) from WPS to McDonald's.
3. WPS cannot be responsible for student-athletes after they are dropped off, with parental permission, at a location other than the WPS campus.

## **Athletes Code of Conduct**

All WPS athletes will meet with the Director of Athletics prior to the start of each playing season to learn WPS athletic department policies and expectations. Students will sign the ***WPS Student-Athlete Code of Conduct*** to reinforce appropriate behavior for athletics.

## **Awards Assembly for Team Sport Athletes and Parents**

At the end of each athletic season, all team athletes and their parents and friends are invited (and expected) to attend an awards assembly. Athletes and coaches are honored for their season of hard work, athletic certificates and varsity letters are given, and individual and team comments are presented.

## **Cancellations**

Scheduled games may be canceled due to bad weather, poor field conditions or other reasons. It is the "home" team's responsibility to make this decision in a timely fashion. Please check WPS's website for up to the minute schedule changes.

## **Captains**

An important part of any team's camaraderie is good leadership. WPS team captains are responsible, communicate well to every team member, and are respected by their team and coaches. It is more than being a good athlete that makes a good leader. It is an honor and a privilege to be a captain and the selection process should be taken very seriously.

## **Clean Up**

All practice and game areas, locker rooms and buses should be cleaned before any student athlete leaves campus for the day. It is the responsibility of the players, **not the coach**, to throw away trash, return items to their proper storage space and to gather all equipment after an event.

## **Communication**

When in doubt, communicate. The Athletic Director communicates to the coaches, the coaches communicate to their players, the players should communicate to their parents. Parents, please **do not** communicate directly to an opposing school to report on the behavior of one of their team members or coaches. Upon completion of the contest please notify the WPS Athletic Director the next morning.

Team schedules and other communication can be found on the WPS web site- [www.worcesterprep.org/eastern-shore-private-school-sports](http://www.worcesterprep.org/eastern-shore-private-school-sports).

Up to the minute schedule changes and other information can be found on the WPS website as well.

## **Conference Affiliations**

E.S.I.A.C. Eastern Shore Independent Athletic Conference (Soccer, Field Hockey Golf, Basketball, Tennis and Lacrosse)

M.I.L.L. Metro Independent Lacrosse League (Boys Lacrosse)

P.A.C.C. Peninsula Athletic Christian Conference (Volleyball)

## **Conference and Team awards**

All WPS team athletes could be the recipient of conference awards through ESIAC, MILL, and PACC and specific coach's awards. Conference awards are voted on by the other coaches in the E.S.I.A.C. conference. Team awards are determined by the coaches.

### **Cuts (Upper School only)**

Due to limited roster sizes for golf, basketball and tennis teams, we are forced to cut squads when numbers exceed that which would make for an optimal experience for those involved.

- Cuts will be made by the head coach of each team after conferring with his/her staff and the athletic director
- Each individual to be cut will be notified in person and given an explanation of why he/she has been cut and suggestions on how to improve.
- Concerns about these decisions should be addressed by the player in question. The player should arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with the head coach

### **Directions**

Directions to all AWAY games, and matches, can be found on the WPS website. For each away game listed on the team schedule page you can get instant GPS directions from any smart device just by clicking the icon with the word “map” underneath it.

### **Game Days**

Student-athletes will attend and be on time for every game. Student-athletes who are absent from practice the day before a game are subject to all team rules that address this issue. Students must be present for at least a half-day (3 hours) of school to be eligible for participation in that day’s contest. Student-athletes that stay home because of an illness and do not attend school may not participate in that day’s contest.

### **Hazing**

- Hazing and degrading initiations have no place in education-based activities.
- NFHS defines hazing as any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a student to belong to a group.
- The WPS “community” is a place of learning, support, understanding and positive lifetime memories.
- “Team bonding” traditions should create a spirit of camaraderie.
- “Life is a constant search for community.”

## Lettering Policy

There are many benefits to participating in interscholastic sports programs at Worcester Preparatory School. The personal traits one can develop as a student-athlete are: teamwork, perseverance, responsibility, physical endurance, commitment, time management, and personal and emotional health. When a student decides to join an athletic team, a commitment must be made to attend all practices and to give 100% effort. Teammates rely upon and support one another to reach common goals. Student athletes show loyalty to teammates by being dependable and responsible, attending all practices and putting forth their best physical and mental effort.

However, being a student-athlete for WPS goes far beyond the practices and games. We expect our student-athletes to show and display great character. We expect our student-athletes to display exemplary leadership by doing what is right, even when no one is watching. And we expect our student-athletes to be positive role models for their fellow teammates and the student community at WPS.

Worcester Preparatory School is committed to a high standard of achievement for earning a varsity letter, the standard of recognition for individual success as an upper school student-athlete. A student-athlete must be a member of a **varsity team** to earn a **varsity letter**. A member of the varsity team is defined as one who takes part in practices, scrimmages, games and tournaments (home and away) with the varsity team. Student-athletes that participate on a varsity team and stay committed through the season will receive a varsity letter.

Student-athletes are reminded that the varsity letter is an award that recognizes one's dedication and commitment to the team and to their sport. Student-athletes who fail to complete a season for any reason other than injury may not letter. Athletes who suffer an event such as injury/illness or other legitimate extenuating circumstance may still letter. In addition, violations of school and individual team sport rules or multiple unexcused absences, could result in a student-athlete being disqualified from earning a varsity letter.

A Junior Varsity Letter, which is different from a varsity letter, will be awarded to those who participate on a junior varsity team. A member of a junior varsity team is defined as one who takes part in in practices, scrimmages, games or tournaments with a junior varsity team. There may be seasons or situations where a JV player(s) will need to "float" between both programs. Under this scenario a JV player must play in 50% of the varsity team's regular season contests to be eligible for a varsity letter.

Team managers also play a vital role for varsity and junior varsity athletic teams at Worcester Preparatory School. Team managers will be recognized for their dedication and commitment and will be held to the same standards as student-athletes. Team Managers are expected to be at practices, scrimmages, games and tournaments (home and away) with the team. Those team managers that stay committed through the season will receive a varsity or junior varsity letter.

Student-athletes or team managers must fully understand the commitment to becoming a lettered athlete. Listed below are general expectations of student-athletes. Failure to meet those expectations could exclude a student-athlete or manager from receiving a varsity or junior-varsity letter:

1. Attendance— Attendance at all practices, games, and team activities is expected of all student-athletes and managers. Those who have repeated excused or unexcused absences may run the risk of not receiving a letter.

2. Attitude and Effort—Student-athletes are expected to have a positive attitude and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their team, and to representing WPS within the school community and community at large. A good attitude and respect for others will make the experience much more memorable for all involved. Those who do not display a positive attitude or demonstrate a lack of effort and commitment may run the risk of not receiving a letter.
3. Coachable—Players are expected to listen to their coaches, have an open mind to feedback and instruction, and be willing to give their best effort at all times. Those who do not accept their role and responsibility on a team will jeopardize their chance of receiving a letter.

### **Maryland State Department of Education Standards of Interscholastic Athletic Competition**

WPS is an approved school by the MD State Department of Education's 17 point program. This allows us to practice or play against member schools of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools athletic association (MPSSAA) pursuant to COMAR 13A.06.03.04D(6).

### **Playing Time**

#### **Varsity Team Participation**

- So that each player feels that he/she is an integral part of the team, coaches make a conscientious effort to play all participants when they can. However, at the varsity level, playing time is earned, not guaranteed. Substitutions and playing time are based on the coach's judgment of what is best for the team.
- Coaches will recognize and reward the most skilled players; however, coaches will also reward players with outstanding attitudes of determination, unselfishness, and excellent work habits.

#### **JV Team Participation**

- Coaches should try to play as many players as possible in every game, however, the objective is to train varsity talent and to learn how to win.
- Student-athlete must learn to play their assigned role to the best of their ability, always working hard so that their performance might be good enough to earn a more significant roll.

**\*\*\*It is very important to understand that playing time can be restricted due to absences, lack of participation, poor attitude, and an overall lack of commitment to the team.**

## **Middle School Team Participation**

Middle School athletics has a participatory approach, which focuses on the development of skills, and specific sport fundamentals appropriate for an introductory level of interscholastic competition. WPS Middle School Athletics promotes and encourages students to play sports whether they are experienced or beginners. Teams are comprised of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders only.

When there are participation numbers that exceed a normal roster size, the team will be separated by ability into 2 teams in order to facilitate a cohesive team and an appropriate schedule. Teams will be named Red and Blue.

## **Multiple Sport Participation**

WPS students-athletes are encouraged to participate in more than one sport during the academic school calendar. Student-athletes that participate in multiple sports that overlap seasons, are exempt from the first week of practice of the new season, so that they may refocus their attention on their academic needs as well as recuperate and recover from any injuries from the season in which they have just completed.

## **Practice**

Practice times are: 3:00 pm-5:00 pm

It is important to the team, coach, and WPS programs that the student-athletes attend and be on time for every practice. When students are missing from practice on a regular basis, the coach has the option of removing that player from the team. If a student is not in school for half a day (3 hours), he/she may not practice. The exception is in the case of extenuating circumstance, which will be verified by the parent and must be approved by the Director of Athletics.

A coach has the option of holding a weekend or nontraditional practice when school may be out (i.e. when WPS is on Christmas or Winter Break or when school is out for a professional faculty day or federal holidays.)

## **Press Coverage**

Coaches are responsible for communicating to the local papers/TV News for press coverage after an event. Coaches are supplied with all of the local media contact info prior to the start of the season. It is our approach to try and get as much press coverage as possible with all local media outlets.

## **Safety**

Every WPS student-athlete must complete an Emergency Form including vital information, which is needed in case of an injury. These forms will be filed with the Head Athletic Trainer. Student-athletes will report all injuries and sickness immediately to their coach or to our Head Athletic Trainer. If a student is injured under a coach's supervision, he/she will contact the Athletic Trainer who in turn will document the injury by using an accident report form. If the Head Athletic Trainer is unavailable, the coach will document the injury and give the injury report to the Athletic Director. The coach will follow up with the parent as appropriate.

## **Sports Change Policy**

WPS student-athletes have the first week of the season to transition to a different sport. The procedure in doing this consists of gaining permission first from the Director of Athletics and then the acceptance from both coaches.

## **Sportsmanship**

Coaches and players shall at all times represent themselves and their school with honor in accordance with the WPS Student-Athlete Code of Conduct form. Competition is encouraged, but disrespect for opponents is unsportsmanlike and lessens the value of healthy rivalries. Competition shall be confined to the fields. Coaches, players, and WPS spectators shall behave properly on the sidelines and in the locker rooms both before and after games. WPS coaches adhere to the NFHS code of ethics.

Coaches and players shall comply fully with the rulings of the officials. In no way, either by voice, action, or gesture, shall they demonstrate in an unsportsmanlike manner their dissatisfaction with the decisions made.

Coaches and players must never forget that they represent their school. Worcester Prep is proud of the behavior and sportsmanship displayed by its player, coaches, and fans. If a student is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike behavior, it is the E.S.I.A.C. policy that he/she will not be allowed to compete in the next game/match. Coaches must communicate to the Athletic Director when athletes are removed from a contest.

\* For further expectations of fans and student-athletes please visit our website at [www.worcesterprep.org/athletics](http://www.worcesterprep.org/athletics)

## **Sportsmanship of our Spectators**

Parents and other fans are accountable to the WPS teams that they are supporting. Parents will be expected to read the Student-Athlete and Parent Code of Conduct/Participation Pledge form.

## **Student Athlete Code of Conduct**

All WPS athletes will meet with the Director of Athletics the first practice day of each new to season learn and discuss the Student-Athlete Code of Conduct and Participation Pledge. Students will be give a copy of this document and are expected to follow all guidelines as laid out in the Code of Conduct and Participation Pledge.

## **Thunder and Lightning**

Fall and spring sports teams coaches check the weather before practice and games. For all other teams, we follow the NFHS thunder and lightning guidelines.

## **Uniforms, Practice Clothing and Equipment**

Athletes are expected to have their own equipment that has been approved by the National Federation of High Schools.

Students participating on athletic teams will receive a practice pennie, team uniform and team jacket. The up-keep and cleaning of the uniforms falls solely on the student-athlete. Any damages that occur must be relayed to the coach and Athletic Director immediately.

## **Uniform Collection Procedure**

Upon completion of a team's season, the head coach will conduct a team uniform turn-in day. This event will take place 2 school days immediately following the completion of the playing season. If the season ends on a Friday, then the turn in day will be Wednesday. **ALL uniforms, practice pennies and team jackets MUST be laundered first prior to turning them back in.**

Students will be held personally and financially responsible for any uniforms and WPS equipment that is not returned at the end of each playing season.