INSTRUCTION

Sportsmanship

The interscholastic athletic program is an important part of the School Division’s total educational program and, when kept in proper perspective, contributes to the goals of education.

Good sportsmanship, defined as the behavior of administrators, coaches, student athletes, students, teachers, and community members in a manner that brings respect and credit to the individual, school, and community, shall receive special emphasis in the interscholastic athletic program. Each school shall provide a statement representing the expectations and standards of sportsmanship as part of their public introduction at all sporting events. Therefore, the following excerpts from the “Virginia High School League’s Code for Interscholastic Athletics” are officially endorsed by Prince William County Public Schools.

Code for Interscholastic Athletics

The School Administrator Shall:

I. Encourage and promote friendly relationships and good sportsmanship throughout the school by requiring courtesy and proper decorum at all times, acquainting students and others in the community with ideals of good sportsmanship, and publicizing these concepts and attitudes so that all members of the school community will understand and appreciate their meaning;

II. Insist upon implicit compliance with all rules and regulations of the Virginia High School League;

III. Secure qualified officials for all contests;

IV. Insist upon adequate safety provisions for participants and spectators;

V. Approve only those activities and schedules which are educationally and physically sound for the student;

VI. Encourage all to judge the success of the athletic program on the basis of the sportsmanship, teamwork, and specific skills development, rather than the number of games won or lost;

VII. Insist that the school cheerleaders exemplify the highest standard of good sportsmanship as a means of instilling desirable spectator attitudes;
VIII. Provide adequate hygienic, sanitary, and attractive facilities for the dressing and housing of visiting teams and officials; and

IX. Review with staff the Sportsmanship Rule.

The Spectator Shall:

I. Realize that the spectator represents the school as much as the member of a team, and therefore has an obligation to be a true sportsman, encouraging through this behavior the practice of good sportsmanship by others;

II. Recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team;

III. Recognize that the primary purpose of interscholastic athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of contests, and victory or defeat is of secondary importance;

IV. Treat visiting teams and officials as guests, extending to them every courtesy;

V. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat; and

VI. Respect the judgment and integrity of officials, realizing that their decisions are based upon game conditions as they observe them.

The Athlete Shall:

I. Be courteous to visiting teams, officials, and spectators;

II. Play hard and to the limit of their ability, regardless of discouragement. The true athlete does not give up and does not quarrel, cheat, bet, or grandstand;

III. Retain composure at all times and never leave the bench or enter the playing field or court to engage in a fight;

IV. Be modest when successful and be gracious in defeat. A true sportsman offers support to teammates and opponents, positive attitude, and an overall celebration of fair behavior and competition;
V. Maintain a high degree of physical fitness by observing team and training rules conscientiously;

VI. Demonstrate loyalty to the school by maintaining a satisfactory scholastic standing and by participating in, or supporting other school activities;

VII. Play for the love of participating in the game;

VIII. Understand and observe the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility;

IX. Set a high standard of personal cleanliness;

X. Respect the integrity and judgment of officials and accept their decisions without questions;

XI. Respect the facilities of host schools and the trust entailed in being a guest; and

XII. All behavior shall be in accordance with the “Code of Behavior” and is subject to disciplinary action.

The Coach Shall:

I. Exemplify behavior that is representative of the educational staff of the school and a credit to the teaching profession;

II. Demonstrate high ideals, good habits, and desirable attitudes in personal behavior and demand the same standards of the players;

III. Emphasize to players and bench personnel the importance of proper sideline behavior and the necessity of restraining from entering the playing field or court to engage in a fight;

IV. Recognize that the purpose of competition is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players and that the most important values of competition are derived from playing the game fairly;

V. Be a modest winner and gracious in defeat;

VI. Maintain self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions without public display of emotion or of dissatisfaction with the officials;
VII. Cooperate with the school principal in the planning, scheduling, and conduct of sports activities;

VIII. Employ accepted educational methods in coaching; give all players an opportunity to use and develop initiative, leadership, and judgment;

IX. Communicate with players using appropriate, respectful language that preserves the dignity of every player, whether the student is on his or her team or the opposing team;

X. Communicate off the field with players in a transparent method that utilizes social media and email in an appropriate manner that includes parents;

XI. Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players, refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of improving the team’s chances to win;

XII. Teach athletes that it is better to lose fairly than win unfairly;

XIII. Discourage gambling, profanity, abusive language, and similar violations of the true sportsman’s code;

XIV. Refuse to disparage an opponent, an official or others associated with sports activities; discourage gossip and questionable rumors concerning them; and

XV. Properly supervise student athletes under his/her immediate care and specifically observe a coach’s responsibilities in conjunction with district and state contests.

The Official Shall:

I. Know the rules and their interpretations and be thoroughly trained to administer them;

II. Maintain self-control under all conditions;

III. Report for duty well in advance of game time, in a rested condition, with an alert mind, and dressed appropriately in the specified uniform;

IV. Make clear all interpretations and rulings during the progress of a game, yet conduct the game in an unobtrusive manner;

V. Be impartial and fair, yet firm, in all decisions. A good official does not attempt to compensate later for an unpopular decision;
VI. Refrain from commenting upon or discussing a team, play, or game situation with those not immediately concerned;

VII. Conduct the games as to enlist the cooperation of players, coaches, and spectators in the interest of good sportsmanship; and

VIII. Honor all commitments and abide by all school, district, regional, and league regulations in a professional manner.

The Level Associate Superintendents and Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.