

PENNCREST SCHOOL DISTRICT



STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

(Revised July, 2020)

PENNCREST School District

Student Athletic Policy

The following information is provided to assure that the students and parents of PENNCREST School District are properly and adequately informed of the policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to interscholastic athletics. These policies shall apply to all students connected to the athletic programs and shall govern athletes, managers, statisticians, mascots, and cheerleaders.

The Board of Directors shall set policy for the operation of the athletic program within the PENNCREST School District and will make all decisions as are required by law.

Approved Sports

Baseball	Soccer
Basketball	Softball
Cross Country	*Swimming/Diving
Football	Volleyball
Golf	Wrestling

Cheerleading squads support the following sports: basketball, football and wrestling.

*Saegertown Only (Cooperative Agreement with Crawford Central).

Alumni Participation

The district encourages athletic programs to bring alumni and other clinicians to practices to be a guest instructor/speaker. However, alumni and guest clinicians may not participate or scrimmage in live situations with teams or individual players **without prior board approval**. The Head Coach must be present during alumni presentations/instruction. **A clinician or alumni may be present at one (1) practice session. Beyond this one (1) practice this clinician becomes a volunteer and must then acquire all of the clearances required by the district for any regular volunteer.**

Athletic Administrative Organization

Student/Parents are urged to use the proper line of communication when questions or situations arise:

- first consult with the head coach**
- second the athletic director**
- third with the principal. Please schedule a conference in advance**

Athletic Affiliations

The secondary schools of PENNCREST School District are participating members of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (P.I.A.A.), the District Ten (Regions) and French Creek Valley Athletic Association (F.C.V.A.A.)

Athletic Awards

Athletic awards will be determined by the coaches, athletic directors and principals.

Cancellation of Scheduled Athletic Events

The principal or designee will make the decision on cancellations.

- **If school is cancelled before the day begins, the principal may authorize school-sponsored and non-school sponsored activities to continue, but participation by students is strictly voluntary and the principal must notify the superintendent of this decision.**
 - **If school is cancelled before the day begins all Junior High athletic events are cancelled but the principal may allow students to participate in tournaments. The principal must notify the superintendent of his/her decision.**
- **If school is cancelled during the day and students are dismissed early, all school sponsored and non-school sponsored activities, except for tournaments and post-season athletic competition (district or state playoffs), will be cancelled. Any other requests for exceptions must be directed by the principal to the superintendent.**

Cheerleading Stunts

All schools will follow the same guidelines—NO PROPELLING OR TOSSING UPWARD. No mounts/pyramids should be greater than two (2) high. No member of the squad will execute a front or back aerial flip from a pyramid. No cheerleader shall stand on or be supported by another person unless that supporting person has **both feet** on the ground. Principals, Athletic Director, game site manager, or other Administrators can eliminate the activity if, in their judgment, it threatens student safety.

College Athletics

Participation in any sport at the collegiate level requires extensive preparation of materials for potential colleges and the N.C.A.A. clearinghouse. Parents are the primary facilitator for their athlete/student in this process. Coaches will provide resources in a timely manner such as game tapes and statistics when requested by the parents.

COVID 19

Information from the various authorities, (CDC, PDE, PA Governor's Office, PIAA, and DOH) who are providing guidelines, recommendations, and rules for public school athletic programs to operate during the pandemic, changes on a weekly/daily basis. The PENNCREST School District will distribute timely updates to the coaching staff regarding the most recent expectations and best practices. Each update will be considered an addendum to the current Coaches Handbook and will be given the same importance as each item found in the Coaches Handbook.

N.C.A.A. Clearinghouse

It is the responsibility of the student athlete who plans on participating in Intercollegiate Athletics at Division I or II level to register with the N.C.A.A. clearinghouse online and notify the guidance office to have a transcript sent.

http://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp

Doctor Excuses

If a student produces a doctor's note excusing them from PE class, that student is also not permitted to participate in PIAA sanctioned athletics for the duration of the excuse. This is in keeping with the PIAA established philosophy that places emphasis on academics above athletics.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The School Board of the PENNCREST School District recognizing that the misuse of chemicals is a serious problem with legal, physical, emotional and social implications for the whole school community, adopts the position that students must be chemically free in order that they may develop in the most productive and healthy manner.

It is therefore, this district's policy to prevent and prohibit the possession and/or use, mimic of use, sale, and/or mimic of sale, distribution, and/or intent of distribution of any illegal or controlled mood-altering chemical medication or abused chemical not approved by past policy, on school property, at school-sponsored events, on school buses and in route to and from school by any mode of travel.

Dual-Sporting

Dual-Sporting shall be defined as participation in two sports during the same season. Students wishing to participate in two (2) sports will follow all administrative guidelines. Guideline requirements must be completed two (2) weeks prior to the start of the season. Students wishing to participate in dual-sporting must contact the athletic director.

In situations where special transportation is necessary for participation in both sports, it shall be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to make such arrangements.

Coaches whose teams and athletes are involved in post-season competitions may "share" athletes to participate in another sports program at their discretion.

Equipment Responsibility

Each student athlete is required to return all issued equipment within the time limits established by the coach. Lost, stolen, or damaged equipment must be paid for by the student athlete, parent or guardian. Any student who has not accounted for equipment will not be issued any other school equipment until said equipment is accounted for. Athletic awards will not be issued until the participant has returned all assigned athletic equipment.

Extra-curricular Severe Weather Plan

For the safety of the students, players and/or spectators of extra-curricular events, PENNCREST School District has developed a Severe Weather Plan. When severe weather threatens the safety of spectators and participants, an event official may make a decision to direct spectators and participants to evacuate the event.

For evacuation of indoor activities, established and posted evacuation plans should be followed to a safe location within the building.

For evacuation of outdoor activities, everyone will vacate to their own vehicle, team bus, or to the designated safe location within the closest school building as directed by officials.

You may be asked to follow additional procedures by school employees if the severe weather should warrant additional safety measures.

Hazing

The District Hazing Policy is summarized here. For the full text of the policy refer to policy #247.

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

The Board does not condone any form of initiation or harassment, known as hazing as part of a school sponsored activity. No student, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist or engage in any hazing activity.

The Board directs that no administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall permit, condone or tolerate any form of hazing. Students, administrators, coaches, sponsors, volunteers and district employees shall be alert to incidents of hazing and report such conduct to the building principal.

District administrators shall investigate promptly all complaints of hazing and administer appropriate discipline to any individual who violates this policy.

Definitions:

Hazing—is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization recognized by the Board.

Endangering the Physical Health—shall include but not be limited to any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping; beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, alcoholic beverage, drug or controlled substance, or other forced physical activity that could adversely affect the physical health or safety of the individual.

Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates.

Complaint Procedure:

1. When a student believes that s/he has been subject to hazing the student shall promptly report the incident, orally or in writing, to the building principal.
2. The principal shall conduct a timely, impartial, thorough and comprehensive investigation of the alleged hazing.
3. The principal shall prepare a written report summarizing the investigation and recommending disposition of the complaint. Copies of the report shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and others directly involved as appropriate.
4. If the investigation results in a substantial finding of hazing, the principal shall take appropriate disciplinary action, as circumstances warrant, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Additionally, the student may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or sponsor, up to and including removing from the activity.

Sports Medicine

Sports Medicine services are provided through a collaborative agreement between PENNCREST school district and Crawford County Sports Medicine at the Meadville Medical Center. Contact phone number for Crawford County Sports Medicine is 814-333-5214<tel:814-333-5214>.

All home sporting events as well as select away events and practices are attended by a Sports Medicine staff member for initial injury recognition, immediate treatment and referral as deemed necessary. Additionally, Licensed Athletic Trainers are available daily for injury prevention education, injury rehabilitation, orthopedic referral, and other services. No cost walk-in injury clinics are available bi-weekly at Crawford County Sports Medicine's Meadville office for PENNCREST student-athletes.

Concussions/ImPACT

Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT) is a concussion management tool utilized in concussion recovery to provide objective data to healthcare providers. All student-athletes are required to complete testing bi-yearly to log individualized baseline scores. All suspected and diagnosed concussions must be evaluated by Crawford County Sports Medicine's Licensed Athletic Trainers and physician with return to play clearance provided once management procedures have been completed. No additional healthcare providers may provide concussion clearance unless referred directly from Crawford County Sports Medicine.

Injuries and Insurance

It is the athlete's responsibility to **immediately** report an injury to the coach. It is the responsibility of the coach to file the appropriate accident form with the high school office.

PENNCREST School District generally does **not** provide primary medical/accident insurance for students who attend district schools. Each student's parents or guardians are responsible for providing the primary insurance coverage they believe is appropriate to provide medical care in the event the student becomes ill or is injured while attending school and extra-curricular activities.

The District **does**, however, provide a secondary insurance policy (called a "\$100 excess policy") for students who participate in school-sponsored and supervised interscholastic athletic activities. This policy is generally designed to cover out-of-pocket expenses that are not otherwise covered by the parents' primary insurance. The District's policy will pay the first \$100 of covered expenses without regard to any other insurance. The parents' primary insurance will pay expenses in excess of \$100. The parents may subsequently submit a claim to the district's carrier for out-of-pocket amounts such as deductibles, co-payments and co-insurance.

PENNCREST School District has also made arrangements for parents or guardians to optionally purchase inexpensive insurance coverage for students. The carrier offers one plan with 24- hour coverage and another with school-time only coverage.

Please contact the PENNCREST School District Business Office at 337-1620 if you have specific questions about insurance coverage.

Off-Campus and Co-Curricular Activities/Discipline

The District considers participating in co-curricular/interscholastic activities to be a privilege. The PENNCREST School District has the right to adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing participation in co-curricular/interscholastic activities.

District Policy 218, Student Discipline, specifies the types of student conduct that could lead to exclusion from school, including conduct that occurs off school property and would violate the Code of Student Conduct if:

1. There is a close connection between the time when the conduct occurs or the location where the conduct occurs and the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.
2. The student who engages in the conduct participates in a curricular activity and has been previously notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from the activities.
3. The student's conduct or verbal or written expression materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school or has a reasonable likelihood of doing so.

4. The conduct has a connection with attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, because of an agreement to engage in conduct outside of school which would violate the Code of Student Conduct.
5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.

Conduct which may not result in exclusion from school under Policy 218 may still result in denial of the privilege of participating in athletic or co-curricular activities notwithstanding where the conduct occurred.

Parent Meeting

The Athletic Director and/or the head coach will arrange a mandatory parent meeting at the beginning of the sport season to distribute and explain team rules, coaching expectations, and the Student Athletic Handbook. Students will not be permitted to participate in games or competitions until their parent has attended the meeting or met individually with the Athletic Director and/or the head coach.

Participation

After the first regular season competition, students who participate in a sport and quit that sport may not play another sport during that season.

Practice Sessions

There is to **absolutely no** practice or facsimile thereof on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day. In the event a Sunday practice would be authorized, practice will be held between the hours of 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Principal's Responsibility to Senior High School Athletics

“The principal of the high school, in all matters pertaining to the interscholastic athletic relations of his school, is responsible to the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association. He may delegate some of these powers, but such delegation shall not relieve him of the responsibility for any infraction of the school of the Constitution and By-Laws of the P.I.A.A.”

Responsibilities of Student Athletes

The responsibilities of student athletes shall include the following:

1. Attend all practices and be punctual unless s/he has a reasonable excuse.
2. Maintain clean locker room habits, keeping his/her body as well as his/her equipment clean.
3. Refrain from using profane language.
4. Refrain from participating in “horse play.”
5. Encourage proper conduct both in victory and defeat.
6. Respect constituted authorities both on and off the field of play.
7. Maintain at least eight (8) hours of sleep each night.
8. Be neatly groomed and properly dressed at all times, since athletes represent the school and community.
9. Refrain from using tobacco in any form, drinking alcoholic beverages or using or possessing drugs.
Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Board policy.

10. Develop good study habits.
11. Assume responsibilities at home, school, and in the community.
12. Inform coaches of his/her health status at all times.
13. Be sure that all injuries are reported.

Rules Governing Student Eligibility

Residency: Students must be residents of the PENNCREST School District and comply with P.I.A.A. Residency Requirements. Students not residing with natural parent or parents (including affidavit students) must notify the athletic director for clarification concerning eligibility.

Age: If the maximum age of nineteen (19) is attained on or after July 1, the student shall be eligible to compete through that school year.

Medical Physicals: Each student athlete is required to obtain a physical or recertification for each sport. Sport physicals may be obtained after June 1. This examination may be given by the school physician or family physician.

Student Handbook: Each student athlete must return a signed parent/student acknowledgement form (last page of student handbook) to the coach prior to participation in any competition.

Attendance: Any student who is absent from school all or part of the school day without urgent reason, doctor or dental excuse, will not be permitted to practice or participate in any sport on that day. The principal will make the final determination as to the acceptability of an excuse. In addition, the principal will make the final decision as to a student athlete's eligibility for a particular day when the student is tardy.

Tardy: **Students athletes must be in school before 8:10 each day. Tardies without a medical/dental excuse will result in no practice/play. Student athletes MAY be granted 3 late passes each season which allows them to participate that night. However, to earn the late pass an athlete must be signed into school by 8:40 AM. Students signing in after 8:40 AM will be ineligible that night without a medical/ dental excuse. Principals have the discretion to make decisions in matters where extenuating circumstances apply.**

Academic Eligibility: If a student earns one (1) "F," the student is ineligible but may practice at the discretion of the **coach** or his/her designee. Except that, a student who earns one (1) "F" can regain eligibility and continue participation in the activity by participating in a qualified tutoring program during the week following the earning of one (1) "F." Failure to receive the tutoring will result in automatic ineligibility during the subsequent week regardless of reported grades. **The tutoring program, established by the administration, will be a minimum of two (2) athletic tutoring sessions per week, most commonly occurring during lunch.** It may be before school, during the day, or after school, dependent upon the school administration.

If a student earns two (2) or more "F's," the student is ineligible for competition but may practice at the discretion of the **coach** or his/her designee. **Said student will attend one (1) athletic tutoring session, most commonly occurring during lunch, every day of the week that athletic tutoring is offered.**

This policy shall be in effect for all athletic competition including post-season competition and/or playoffs. An ineligible student may not dress for any competition, sit with the team nor travel to away events on school transportation.

Eligibility shall be cumulative from the beginning of a grading period and be reported on a weekly basis.

End of Semester: In the event that postseason play occurs within fifteen (15) days of the end of a grading period, PIAA Eligibility Regulations will be adhered to.

Cyber/Charter School: Students who reside in the PENNCREST School District and attend a cyber/charter school must follow PENNCREST Policy #140.1 **The parents of the student are responsible for providing weekly eligibility and attendance information to the school.**

Home School: Students who are home schooled must follow PENNCREST Policy #137.1 **The parents of the student are responsible for providing weekly eligibility and attendance information to the school.**

Suspension: (In-School or Out-of-School) A student athlete will not be permitted to participate in practice or competition until the suspension is satisfied. A student athlete who finishes the school day under suspension is not eligible until the following day.

Detention: A student athlete may participate in practice or competition at the coach's discretion.

Conduct: The student body, the community, and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitudes both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you contribute greatly to school spirit and community pride.

Athletes must follow the rules/regulations of the school, athletic department, and their individual coach. In the event an athlete fails to comply with these necessary standards, it will be interpreted as an indication that the athlete does not have sufficient desire to participate in the interscholastic athletic program. The privilege of participating will be denied until such time as the athlete can prove this desire.

Sportsmanship

“Good sportsmanship involves a commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as these 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.” (National Federation of High School Associations).

P.I.A.A. Sanctioned Playoffs

The district authorizes participation in all P.I.A.A. sanctioned playoffs and will assume all costs resulting from authorized participation by the athletic teams of the school district for all events (with the exception of individual tournaments). The number of participants for post season play is limited to the following:

Basketball—16 Team Personnel

Baseball—18 Team Personnel

Cheerleaders—10 Team Personnel

Football—30 Team Personnel

Soccer—20 Team Personnel

Softball—18 Team Personnel

Volleyball—16 Team Personnel

Cross Country—Qualified Participant(s), 2 Coaches, Manager

Golf—Qualified Participant(s), 1 Coach

Wrestling—Qualified Participant(s), 2 Coaches, 1 Manager

Team personnel will include players, coaches and support personnel. Additional team personnel may travel on approved transportation with the team. The additional personnel will be required to pay their own meals/hotel expenses.

Season Ending

The official end of the season will be the conclusion of the team banquet.

Student Participation in P.I.A.A. Sanctioned Playoffs in Sports Not Sanctioned by the District

Students who seek to qualify for participation in P.I.A.A. sanctioned playoffs in sports not sanctioned by the district must conform to the following:

1. The student must contact the athletic director in a timely fashion and indicate his/her desire to participate.
2. The student must meet all P.I.A.A. and PENNCREST eligibility requirements.
3. The student must meet the minimum requirements of the P.I.A.A. to qualify for the particular event or sport for which the student wishes to participate.

A district sanctioned coach or advisor, approved by the principal, will accompany the student(s) in this case. Once a student qualifies for participation in P.I.A.A. sanctioned playoffs as per this section, the district will assume all costs for the student and coach resulting from participation.

Tobacco Policy

The Board recognizes that smoking presents a health hazard which can have serious consequences for the smoker and the nonsmoker and that tobacco possession and/or use is a violation of law. The Board endorses a TOTAL smoke-free environment in all buildings and grounds at all times. For purpose of this policy the definition of tobacco includes lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, pipe or other lighted smoking product; or materials and smokeless tobacco in any form.

Transportation

Coaches, athletic teams and cheerleaders will be transported by school district transportation or approved charter carriers to and from ALL athletic events.

Coaches may not transport athletes in privately owned vehicles unless the situation is deemed an emergency. In such cases, the coach must contact either the athletic director or building principal as soon as possible. To protect the students, their families and the school district against unwarranted liability, all final transportation arrangements, agreements and contracts will be performed by the school district transportation department under the direct supervision of the Superintendent or his/her designee. Any individual or group electing to act independently, without regard for this provision of the policy will automatically lose the School Board sanction and all protection connected thereto.

Students must return to the point of departure on school vehicles. Students may be discharged at their place of residence upon written request by the parents to the principal only if the carrier passes by the point of residency.

Students not returning to point of departure on school vehicles must submit a written request from their parents to the school principal or his/her designee for approval **in advance** of the activity. **Students may be permitted to return in such cases with parents or legal guardians ONLY. The principal may grant an exception to this rule.** Coaches are to have a sign-out sheet at each event for parents to sign out their student athlete.

In the event of emergency when the principal is not available, the person in charge of the activity may release a student to a parent or guardian upon receipt of written request by the parent or guardian.

Parents have the option to transport their student athletes to post-season events with the approval of the coach. When exercising this option, the parent bears the responsibility, liability and cost of transportation, lodging and meals.

With approval from the coach, a parent's request to transport, house and provide meals for their student athlete for a post-season event may be granted, provided that, the parent(s) signs documentation certifying that they will be totally responsible for the safety and welfare of their student athlete while they are in the care, custody, and control of their parents, notwithstanding the fact that the purpose of the trip is to compete in the post-season event as a representative of PENNCREST School District. Permission forms for this agreement can be obtained by contacting the building principals.

I have read the Student Athletic Handbook and the Parent-Coach Communication brochure and acknowledge the contents contained.

Print Student Name _____

Student Athlete's Signature _____

Date _____

I have read this student handbook and acknowledge the contents contained.

Print Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

(Please sign and return to your coach as soon as possible.)

(Detach and Return)