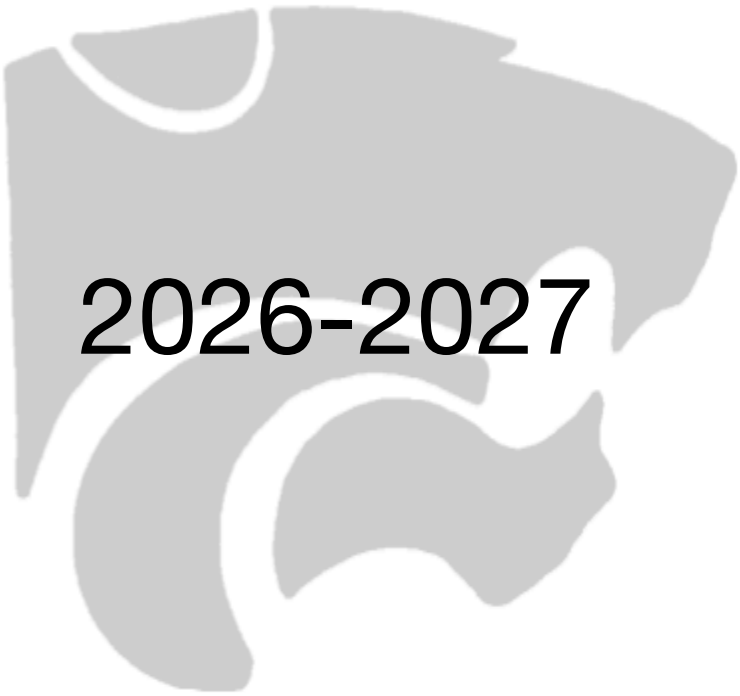
Susquehanna Valley Central School District Department of Athletics



2026-2027

Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook

Revised:
July, 2026

Susquehanna Valley Central School District

Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook
for Athletic Policies and
Procedures

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I. The Susquehanna Valley Athletic Department

A. Organizational Structure:

The Athletic Program is one of several extra-curricular activities that offered to secondary students (grades 7-12) at Susquehanna Valley. The Superintendent of Schools, with the School Board's direction, is responsible for the organization of the program. The Athletic Program is coordinated by the Director of Athletics who is responsible for all phases of the program.

Sport specific questions should be addressed with the coach of your child's team prior to contacting the Director of Athletics. Coaches will be open to parent and student-athlete feedback regarding the program and make every attempt to resolve problems or conflicts in a professional and timely manner. Concerns or questions should be addressed at an appropriate time. Communication Guidelines can be found in *Appendix A*.

Each year the Board of Education approves the appointment of all coaches. The **Head Coach** has responsibility for the entire program in that particular sport. The Head Coach will structure and provide direction to Modified, Junior Varsity and Varsity teams. He/she will work with the Director of Athletics to promote the growth and development of the program. The Head Coach is responsible for all phases of the program and is responsible to aid assistant coaches at all levels in the coordination of a sequentially, aligned program from Modified through Varsity levels. The coach will work to the best of his/her ability and is the authority in matters between players and the coach.

B. Philosophy:

The nature of competitive sport is such that a primary focus becomes the pursuit of excellence. This creates situations where stress, concentration, self-sacrifice, hard work, joy, sorrow, elation and disappointment, both mentally and physically occur. Athletics is one place where a person cannot hide the results of his/her effort. Competition does reveal the extreme positive and, unfortunately, sometimes negative human attributes of the players. The sports experience contributes to the overall education of each participant through emphasis on the pursuit of excellence

Competitive sport does not always lend itself to complete fairness. The majority of athletes must work, sacrifice and develop their ability in order to compete. All participants do not always get the same amount of playing time. The coach will determine the amount of playing time for each athlete. It is usually a function of the quality of practice time. The coach will communicate with players about playing time and what he/she can do to improve. This is part of the self-sacrifice that is required to be a team member and the team should come first. Winning is important in life and sports is a reflection of life.

Winning at any cost is not a reflection of life and has no place in our program. Play hard, play smart, play fair, and be satisfied when you have played your best.

C. Goal:

It is the goal of the Susquehanna Valley Athletic Program to support the District Mission Statement:

"The Susquehanna Valley Central School community is committed to providing a caring equitable environment with high expectations for learning. We encourage the development of critical thinking, self-esteem and responsible citizenship."

D. Specific Objectives:

1. To develop an appreciation and sound educational attitude toward interscholastic athletics and their place in American culture.
2. To develop an understanding and appreciation for good sportsmanship.
3. To serve as a focal point for the development of spirit, and school and community pride.
4. To nurture the development of physical and emotional growth, mental alertness and a healthy competitive spirit for all participants while keeping athletics in the proper perspective.
5. To provide the opportunity for participants to learn how to manage winning and losing properly and to make appropriate decisions for themselves and the team.
6. To develop a feeling of self-confidence and self-esteem through commitment, hard work and dedication to true success in all student-athletes.

E. New York State Public High School Athletic Association:

New York State is divided into eleven (11) sections plus New York City. The State Athletic Association has a set of rules to govern each sport offered in New York State. The State organization will be referred to often as we go through this Handbook. Susquehanna Valley is a member of the N.Y.S.P.H.S.A.A. (New York State Public High School Athletic Association) and is in Section IV. Section IV does have tournaments for most varsity sports and the winner of this tournament moves to a State level competition. Copies of the N.Y.S.P.H.S.A.A. Handbook are available online at http://www.nysphsaa.org.

F. Southern Tier Athletic Conference (S.T.A.C.):

The Southern Tier Athletic Conference is comprised of seventeen (17) member schools that cooperate together to promote and provide athletic competition in various sports. Individual and team champions are recognized by the league and league schedules are provided within the guidelines of New York State and Section IV. The Southern Tier Athletic Conference is one of the most highly regarded leagues in New York State and has established, as one of its goals, the joining together of student-athletes and fans to emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play. We trust each Susquehanna Valley student-athlete will give 100% in these endeavors.

G. Southern Tier Athletic Conference (S.T.A.C.) Sportsmanship Policy:

Whereas good sportsmanship is a major concern among the member schools of the Southern Tier Athletic Conference, a season commitment with the student-athletes, their coaches and their parents/guardians, is being made for the purpose of promoting good conduct among all players, coaches, cheerleaders and fans of the member schools.

Therefore, we are asking all team members, (Varsity, Junior Varsity and Modified) coaches and parents/guardians to certify and honor the following contest sportsmanship guidelines.

See Appendix B.

H. New York State Public High School Athletic Association Misconduct Policy:

The NYSPHSAA has been vested with the responsibility to ensure that all contests under its jurisdiction are conducted satisfactorily.

1. Any member of a squad ruled out of a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct 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. Disqualification from one season carries over to the next season of participation.

2. Any member of the squad who strikes, shoves, kicks or makes other physical contact, or with the intent to do so, with an official shall be expelled from the game immediately and **banned from further participation in all sports for one year from the date of the offense.** An official is to be treated with respect at all times (home or away) by players and/or spectators.

3. Hazing and harassment, or any unwanted physical or verbal acts, threats or demeaning commentary directed at any student-athlete is strictly prohibited. Hazing and these initiations are expressly prohibited by any student-athlete on any of our athletic teams at any level. Consequences will be according to the nature of the event, the severity of the event, and the number of previous occurrences.

4. Any spectator who is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct shall, at a minimum, not attend the next scheduled contest for that sport. The district reserves the right to extend the suspension.

I. Transfer:

A student-athlete who transfers without a corresponding change in residence of his/her parents (or other persons with whom the student has resided for at least six months) is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic athletic contest in a particular sport for a period of one (1) year if the student-athlete participated in that sport during the one (1) year period immediately preceding his/her transfer. Appeals process forms are available in the Director of Athletics Office.

II. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A. Academic Program:

The academic program is the primary focus for our student-athletes. Athletics, along with other extra-curricular programs, is secondary. Our Academic Eligibility Policy is on pages 14-16.

B. Other Extra-Curricular Programs:

The interscholastic athletic program is on an equal basis with other extra-curricular programs. Scheduling conflicts should be avoided as much as possible. Should a conflict arise, the conflict will be resolved by the coach and advisor after the student-athlete notifies both parties.

C. Physical Education Program:

Regardless of participation in the athletic program, all students are required to participate in Physical Education class as established in Board of Education policy as required by the Commissioner of Education and the Board of Regents. An athlete will not be permitted to participate in a practice or contest if he/she chooses not to participate in Physical Education class the day of a practice/contest.

III. GENERAL POLICIES FOR ATHLETICS

The Director of Athletics, in consultation with other district administration and coaches, reserves the right to make decisions on any situation(s) regarding athletics not covered in the Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook.

IV. SPORTS OFFERED AT SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY

Sport	Season	Varsity	JV	Modified
Baseball	Spring	X	X	X
Basketball - Boys	Winter	X	X	X
Basketball - Girls	Winter	X	X	X
Bowling – Boys	Winter	X		
Bowling – Girls	Winter	X		
Cheerleading	Fall	X		
Cheerleading	Winter	X		
Cross Country - Boys	Fall	X		X
Cross Country - Girls	Fall	X		X
Football	Fall	X	X	X
Flag Football	Spring	X		
Golf	Fall	X		
Indoor Track – Boys	Winter	X		
Indoor Track - Girls	Winter	X		
Soccer - Boys	Fall	X	X	X
Soccer - Girls	Fall	X	X	X
Softball	Spring	X	X	X
Swim & Dive - Boys	Winter	X		X
Swim & Dive - Girls	Fall	X		X
Tennis - Boys	Spring	X		X
Tennis - Girls	Fall	X		X
Track & Field - Boys	Spring	X		X
Track & Field - Girls	Spring	X		X
Volleyball	Fall	X	X	X
Wrestling	Winter	X	X	X

V. SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY RULES & REGULATIONS:

When a student-athlete and parent/guardian sign the Athletic Parental Consent Form, they agree to abide by all rules on that form and in the Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook.

A. <u>The Modified Interscholastic Athletic Program</u>:

Interscholastic competition in sports below the 9th grade level, intended for ages 12 to 15 in grades 7-8, have been approved by the N.Y.S.P.H.S.A.A. The Modified Program is designed to develop individual skills, teach sport specific knowledge and strategies, and provide opportunities for students to participate in competition. The modified program will not always guarantee each team member equal participation in contests, but participation by as many as possible is encouraged.

B. <u>Athletic Placement Program:</u>

Athletic Placement Process (APP)

The Board of Education recognizes that, in limited circumstances, certain student-athletes may demonstrate the readiness to participate safely at a level of athletic competition other than that typically associated with their grade level.

Susquehanna Valley Central School District elects to participate in the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Athletic Placement Process (APP) in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations and applicable NYSED guidance.

The purpose of the APP is to provide a process for evaluating exceptional student-athletes who may safely participate at a higher or lower level of competition based upon demonstrated readiness and the standards established by NYSED. The APP is intended only for those student-athletes whose abilities and overall readiness warrant consideration and shall not be used to:

- Fill team roster vacancies;
- Provide additional athletic opportunities;
- Reward participation;
- Circumvent established team selection procedures.

Participation in the APP is voluntary and subject to district approval.

The Athletic Director shall administer the Athletic Placement Process in accordance with current NYSED regulations, guidance, and district procedures.

No student-athlete may participate in practices, scrimmages, or contests at a level requiring APP approval until all NYSED and district requirements have been successfully completed.

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to establish administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

Administrative Procedures

The Susquehanna Valley Central School District participates in the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Athletic Placement Process (APP) in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, NYSED guidance, and Board Policy 5821.

The purpose of the Athletic Placement Process is to provide a process for evaluating exceptional student-athletes who may safely participate at a level of athletic competition other than that typically associated with their grade level. The APP is intended only for those student-athletes whose demonstrated readiness warrants consideration and shall not be used to fill team roster vacancies, provide additional athletic opportunities, or reward participation.

Eligibility

The APP may be used for:

- Students in Grades 7 and 8 who are being considered for participation on a high school athletic team.
- Students in Grades 9 through 12 who are being considered for participation at the modified level, when permitted by NYSED regulations.

Participation in the APP is voluntary and subject to district approval.

Initiation of the APP

The Athletic Director shall determine whether a student-athlete is appropriate for consideration through the APP in accordance with current NYSED regulations and guidance.

No student-athlete may participate in practices, scrimmages, or contests requiring APP approval until all required evaluations and approvals have been successfully completed.

Evaluation Process

Students participating in the APP shall successfully complete all evaluation components required by NYSED.

Evaluations may include, but are not limited to:

- Medical clearance;
- Sport-specific skill evaluation;
- Assessment of physical readiness for the sport;
- Knowledge of the sport;
- Demonstration of appropriate personal and social responsibility;
- Any additional requirements established by NYSED.

The district shall utilize the current NYSED Athletic Placement Process guidance and forms when administering the APP.

Medical Clearance

All student-athletes participating in the APP shall receive medical clearance in accordance with current NYSED regulations and district procedures.

The district's Director of School Health Services (Medical Director), or other authorized healthcare professional consistent with NYSED regulations, shall review all required medical documentation before a student proceeds through the APP process.

Parent/Family/Caregiver Consent

Written informed consent from the student's parent or person in parental relation shall be obtained prior to initiating the Athletic Placement Process.

Team Selection

Successful completion of the APP does not guarantee placement on an athletic team.

Student-athletes approved through the APP must participate in team tryouts and satisfy the same selection criteria as all other candidates for the team.

Administration

The Athletic Director shall:

- Administer the Athletic Placement Process in accordance with NYSED regulations and district procedures;
- Maintain all APP documentation;
- Notify families of final eligibility determinations;
- Ensure district implementation remains aligned with current NYSED regulations and guidance.

Appeals

Questions regarding the administration of the APP shall be directed to the Athletic Director.

The Superintendent or designee shall resolve procedural questions regarding district implementation of the APP.

C. Eligibility Standards:

Interscholastic athletics play an important role in our educational system. Students who participate have an opportunity to gain recognition and sometimes educational opportunities. Therefore, we believe that student-athletes should live up to a set of standards which make them a credit to their school, team, and fellow teammates.

Our league and our school operate under the rules of the **New York State Public High School Athletic Association.**

The rules are as follows:

1. A participant **must be a bona fide student** enrolled in at least four (4) subjects, including Physical Education.
2. A student-athlete shall be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition during eight (8) consecutive semesters upon entry into the 9th grade. A student-athlete shall be eligible for only **four (4) years** in any one interschool sport unless promoted by the Advanced Placement Program.

3. A student-athlete who attains **the age of 19 prior to July 1st** will not be eligible to participate in the Interscholastic Athletics Program.

4. Seventh and eighth grade students between the ages of 12 -15 may participate in the "Modified Program". A student reaching the age of sixteen during a sports season may complete that season and must play Varsity or Junior Varsity the next sport season.

D. Outside Competition (Travel):

N.Y.S.P.H.S.A.A. allows outside competition. Susquehanna Valley student-athletes are expected to be committed to the school team first and outside competition second. Participation in outside competition should not be detrimental to an individual or to a Susquehanna Valley team.

E. Attendance Rules/Procedures

Student-athletes (Grades 7-12) will adhere to the established attendance/tardy policies for his/her building level.

All student-athletes should be in school from the beginning of the day until the end of the day. Athletes who are not in attendance prior to 8:00am will not be eligible for practice/play on that day without providing a legal excuse upon their entrance. A legal excuse will be accepted in the form of a note from a Doctor/Dentist/Medical Provider. (High school student athletes who have been granted 'late arrival' by high school administration will be expected to be on time for their first scheduled class).

If a student-athlete leaves prior to the end of the day due to illness/sickness, he/she will not be eligible to practice or play that evening.

Student-athletes will attend all scheduled classes/activities during the academic day. Any student-athlete skipping a class, or not participating in physical education, will not be eligible to practice or play that day.

The Director of Athletics will make the final decisions on all issues of attendance involving student athletes.

School Attendance -

- Coaches & the athletic department will be reviewing student attendance each day to see if student-athletes qualify to participate or practice that day.

Practice & Game Attendance

- Student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and competitions during the sport season unless legally absent. Student-athletes will follow the training rules provided by the coaching staff.
- If a student-athlete cannot make a practice or competition it is the student-athlete's

responsibility to personally notify the coach.

- Student-athletes will sit with their own team during the entire athletic event. Failure to do so can result in future game suspension(s).
- No student-athlete will leave a game site without permission from the coach. Failure to follow this rule can result in immediate dismissal from the team.
- Postponed athletic contests are rescheduled and played the next day when possible.

F. Behavioral Expectations

Behavioral Expectations and Consequences –

- Students who participate in interscholastic athletics represent themselves, their teams, and Susquehanna Valley Central School during and out of their season. Athletes must demonstrate sportsmanship, character, competence, civility and citizenship at all times. Athletes will follow the established rules of their school building, district, athletic department, and community.
- Violations of schools rules that result in detentions or suspensions will impact an athlete's participation in athletics in the following ways:
  - A student-athlete placed in the Alternative Study Center (ASC) for improper conduct will have the following consequences:
    First Offense: The student-athlete will not be allowed to practice the day of suspension. In cases where suspension occurs on a contest day, the penalty will be served the first available practice day after the contest.
    Second Offense: The student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled contest. The athlete must attend the next scheduled contest in uniform, they will warm up with team but will not be permitted to participate in the contest itself.
  - A student-athlete placed on Out of School Suspension **will not be allowed on school grounds to practice or participate in contests during the 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.

- Any student-athlete who is proven to have become a **chronic behavior problem** on his/her team may be subject to suspension if the coach has followed a progression of disciplinary steps:
  1. Player warning & Player/Coach conference (notify the Director of Athletics)
  2. Parent/Coach conference
  3. Player/Parent/Coach/Director of Athletics conference.

- A student-athlete who uses "practice" as an excuse for failure to do school work or attend required remediation will be subject to the school Code of Conduct. Student-athletes may be required to attend remediation as needed. Coaches should be informed of this need as soon as possible.

G. <u>School Rules</u>:

- All student-athletes must abide by their school building rules and the district Code of Conduct.
- Student-athletes may be denied participation in practice or competition if found in violation of these rules.
- Behaviors such as: consistent tardiness, acts of dishonesty, intimidation, fighting, disrespect, possession of a weapon, insubordination, profanity, or possession of obscene material can lead to a suspension from athletic participation.
- The Principal and the Director of Athletics shall determine the consequence appropriate for the seriousness of the offense.

H. Vandalism/Theft:

Any student-athlete who is proven to have **intentionally committed an act of vandalism, theft, or any other acts that are deemed to be in violation of our Code of Conduct,** either at a Susquehanna Valley School or at an opponent school while representing a Susquehanna Valley team, will be subject to immediate disciplinary action. This will include due process steps with the athlete and parent/guardian and could include a suspension from that team for the remainder of that sport season.

I. Removal from a Team:

When a coach removes a student-athlete from a sport team for disciplinary reasons, he/she will notify the Director of Athletics **immediately**. Student-athletes are entitled to a **Review Board hearing**, if so desired.

J. Use, Possession, Sale of Drugs:

Use, possession, sale or possession with intent to use an alcohol beverage, tobacco (including electronic cigarettes/vapes), drug, narcotic or hallucinating agent or any chemicals purported to be drugs, by a student-athlete is prohibited. Any violation during the sport season, either on or off school grounds, which is reported by a coach, teacher, administrator, law enforcement agency or other reliable source, will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

*A. The student-athlete will be **suspended from the team** for the remainder of the sport season.*

*B. If a student-athlete **seeks professional help for substance abuse**, an appeal may be made to the **Review Board. The Review Board will conduct a hearing within 14 days of the violation to confirm or amend the consequences of letter "A" above**.*

K. Training Rules:

A coach of a sports team may set forth rules in writing which may be more stringent than those set forth in the Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook. These must be approved and on file with the Director of Athletics.

L. Quitting a Team:

If a student-athlete quits a team he/she should **first notify 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 Director of Athletics who will communicate with both coaches.

M. Review Board:

- A student-athlete who violates any of the above rules will be subject to disciplinary action by the coach or Director of Athletics. This action may be appealed to the **Review Board**.

- The **Review Board** has the right to rule on any infraction not covered within the Parent/Student-Athlete Handbook. The **Review Board** consists of the Director of Athletics, Principal of the building (in which the student-athlete attends), and one other administrator or faculty member selected by the Director of Athletics.

N. <u>Appeal Procedure</u>:

- A written appeal prepared and signed by the student-athlete **<u>MUST</u>** be submitted to the Director of Athletics within seven (7) days of notification of disciplinary action. The **<u>Review Board</u>** will consider all written material and may ask that the parties involved appear in person. A final decision will be rendered within seven (7) days after submittal of all information requested by the Review Board.

- The appeal could result in the following:
  a. Upholding the consequence
  b. Reduction in the consequence

- Further appeals may be submitted accordingly to the following:
  A. Superintendent of Schools
  B. Board of Education
  C. Commissioner of Education

O. <u>Academic Eligibility</u>:

Participation in athletic activities offers the opportunity to learn self-discipline, recognition of capabilities, dealing with failure and adversity, teamwork and cooperation, hard work, group problem solving, competitive spirit, self-esteem, self-confidence and pride in accomplishment.

Student-athletes must accept responsibility for their academic endeavors. Every student-athlete will receive equitable and fair treatment. High academic standards for student-athletes are an achievable goal. Parents, coaches, administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff must provide student-athletes with a realistic view of the future and support a solid academic foundation.

THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR WILL SUPERVISE THE FOLLOWING:

<u>Academic Eligibility Checks</u> will be conducted by the Athletic Department at 5 week intervals throughout the school year as indicated below.

<u>FALL</u>: Progress report on or about week #5 and week # 10: 1st quarter report card.

<u>WINTER</u>: Progress report on or about week #15 and week # 20: 2nd quarter report card.

<u>SPRING</u>: Progress report on or about week #25 and week #30: 3rd quarter report card.

At **<u>Academic Eligibility Check</u>** time, the Director of Athletics will issue an Athletic Roster to the Principal. Grade information will be gathered by the Principal and Building Guidance Office and returned to the Director of Athletics. The Athletic Department will identify those student-athletes failing more than one course.

All "**<u>Notifications of Probation</u>**" and "**<u>Notifications of Ineligibility</u>**" will be issued to players, parents, principals and coaches. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to contact the teacher in order to improve grades to a passing/satisfactory level.

Academic Eligibility Check Process:

Student-athletes trying out/participating on athletic teams who are failing more than one course at the Academic Eligibility Check will be placed on "probation." The "probation period" will be 14 calendar days in length as indicated in the notification letter sent by the athletic department. During the "probation period" the student-athlete remains eligible for practices and competitions.

- If the student athlete is not cleared within the 14 calendar day probation period the student- athlete will be deemed ineligible for competitions. At any time, when the student-athlete is passing or showing adequate effort, the teacher will sign the "Notification of Probation" form and the Athletic Department will confirm re-eligibility by signing the notification. Notification will go to the coach and principal to indicate that the student-athlete is again eligible.
- Once a student-athlete has been placed on probation the athlete's grades will continue to be monitored every 5 weeks. If the student-athlete is failing more than one subject at any academic eligibility check, the student-athlete would immediately be deemed ineligible for competition. They may not dress for competitions, but should attend competitions and support their team.

Exceptions (I.E.P.): Student-athletes for whom an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is on file at the time he/she would be declared ineligible under the above standards, shall automatically be afforded a review of their case. The review shall be conducted by the Principal, Director of Health, PE & Athletics, Guidance Counselor, Director of CSE and Special Education Teacher. This review committee shall have the right to waive the eligibility requirement if, in their professional judgment, the student-athlete has made every effort possible to meet the academic standards.

P. Vacation Policy:

A. In the event of an absence, due to a vacation, a student-athlete must:

1. Notify the head coach prior to the season (if possible) or at least two weeks prior to the vacation.
2. Be willing to assume consequences related to their status on that squad. Head Coaches will clearly outline vacation expectations for their specific program at the beginning of the season.

B. Student-athletes not adhering to this policy may be suspended or dismissed from a team pending a meeting with the coach and Director of Athletics.

VI. TRANSPORTATION

A. Travel Regulations:

1. Student-athletes will not engage in misconduct while on a school bus or school provided transportation. It is crucial for student-athletes to behave appropriately while riding on district buses to ensure their safety and the safety of other passengers.
2. All bus rules will be enforced by the coach and the bus driver.
3. Food is not allowed to be eaten on a bus while it is in motion unless the bus driver gives permission.
4. When district approved transportation is provided for the team it is expected that all team members travel to the event with the team.
5. Under extraordinary circumstances (SAT Exams, medical reasons, etc.) parents may obtain permission from the Director of Athletics to drive their son/daughter to an event where transportation is provided by the district. A written request, signed by the parent, must be presented to the Director of Athletics or designee for approval at least 24 hours in advance of the event. Other than in the case of extraordinary circumstances it will be expected that all athletes must ride the school provided transportation to all athletic contests.

6. Student-athletes may leave with ONLY their parent or guardian following an away contest after conferring with his/her coach and signing off on the authorization form. In the event that a parent needs their son/daughter to be transported home by another family this request should be made to the Director of Athletics in writing 24 hours in advance of the contest. The written document should name the individual who will be transporting and should also include phone numbers for both the parent making the request as well as the individual who will doing the transporting.

VII. 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 until all equipment has been returned or paid for.

B. Vandalism and Misuse of Equipment:

All equipment should be cared for as if it were the student-athlete's personal property. The cost of replacement is quite high and we want our teams to have the best possible equipment. A student-athlete who vandalizes or damages athletic equipment intentionally may not try out for another sport until restitution is made.

VIII. PHYSICAL/PERMISSION/MEDICAL INSURANCE

A. Requirements:

1. All student-athletes who desire to participate in athletics must show proof of a valid physical exam, or be examined by the Susquehanna Valley Nurse Practitioner.
2. **NO** student-athlete may practice or participate in athletics without the Susquehanna Valley School Physician or designee's approval.

B. Athletic/Parental Consent Form and Emergency Medical Authorization Form:

1. Forms are available in the Director of Health, PE & Athletics Office and Health Office's at the Middle and Senior High Schools.
2. The student-athlete & parent will completely fill out, sign and return all forms to the Susquehanna Valley School Nurse at the time of the physical examination.

C. Injuries and Accident Reports:

Athletic participation carries with it an increased possibility for injury, some of which could be serious. Coaches will utilize the most current, medically sound, conditioning methods and teach safe, competitive techniques in preparing athletes. However, student-athletes have responsibility to exercise safe playing techniques in practices and games. Student-athletes face a risk of serious injury.

All injuries should be reported to the coach immediately. Early care and treatment can minimize the physical restrictions from an injury and return student-athletes to competition sooner. Student-athletes should report all information to coaches so they can file an accident report.

D. Return to Competition After Injury and/or Extended Absence:

Any student-athlete whose safe participation is in question as a result of injury or prolonged absence due to illness must be released by a medical provider. Student-athletes **WILL NOT** practice before they have received clearance and will be expected to demonstrate sport specific skills and a proper fitness level prior to competing again.

E. Concussion Management Policy:

The Concussion Management and Awareness Act, specifically Chapter 496 of the Laws of 2011, requires the Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Health, to promulgate rules and regulations related to students who sustain a concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI), at school and at any district-sponsored event or related activity. These guidelines for return to school and certain school activities apply to all public school students who have sustained a concussion regardless of where the concussion occurred. *See Appendix C* for the District Policy. *See Appendix D* for Concussion Parent Fact Sheet. *See Appendix E* for Return to Play Protocol.

Appendix A

Susquehanna Valley Athletic Communication Guidelines

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETE/PARENT/COACH

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide great benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

COMMUNICATION YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR CHILD'S COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach and program.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as the entire team.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e. special equipment, off-season expectations, etc.
5. Procedures should your child be injured during participation.
6. Disciplinary action(s) that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach and only after the student-athlete has talked with the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concern in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in the athletic programs at the Susquehanna Valley Middle School and High School, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you and/or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals and they make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for all student-athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things must be left to the discretion of the coach.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy and/or play calling
3. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the others' position.

When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW TO DISCUSS A CONCERN WITH A COACH

1. The student-athlete meets with the coach first to resolve the problem.
2. If resolution is not reached, the parent/guardian will contact the coach to set up a meeting with the coach, the student-athlete and the parent.
3. If the coach cannot be reached call the Athletic Office to assist in arranging a meeting.
4. **Please do not attempt to meet with a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both parents and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.**

WHAT CAN A PARENT DO IF THE MEETING WITH THE COACH DID NOT PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION?

1. Call the Athletic Office to set up an appointment with the Director of Athletics. The parent/guardian, student-athlete, coach and Director of Athletics will meet to discuss the problem.
2. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined.
3. Parents are encouraged to discuss issues and problems with the Director of Athletics. However, if a parent has specific complaints regarding a coach, then the coach must have the opportunity to be present to meet with the parent.

We hope the information provided will assist parents and student-athletes, by making their athletic experience less stressful, more enjoyable, and positive here at Susquehanna Valley Central School.

The Susquehanna Valley Central School District community is committed to providing a caring, equitable environment with high expectations for learning. We encourage the development of critical thinking, self-esteem and responsible citizenship.

Appendix B

Susquehanna Valley Central School District

Department of Health, Physical Education & Athletics

STAC Sportsmanship Policy

Whereas good sportsmanship is a major concern among the member schools of the Southern Tier Athletic Conference, a season commitment with the student athletes, their coaches, and their parents/guardians, is being made for the purpose of promoting good conduct among all players, coaches, cheerleaders, and fans of the member schools.

Therefore, we are asking all team members, (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Modified) coaches, and parents/guardians, to certify and honor the following contest sportsmanship guidelines.

All Concerned Agree:

1. To live up to a high standard of good sportsmanship at all times.
2. To be a good host – treat visitors as guests.
3. To treat opponents with respect.
4. To respect the judgment of the contest officials.
5. To avoid profane and abusive language, and obnoxious behavior.
6. To always set a good example for others to follow.
7. To accept both victory and defeat with pride and compassion, never being boastful, or bitter.
8. To remember that an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life or death for player, coach, school, official, fan, community, state or nation.

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9. Spectators who choose not to follow the aforementioned expectations will be subject to removal from the athletic event. Additional consequences for poor behavior will be at the discretion of District Administration.

POLICY

SUBJECT:
CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

A concussion is a type of mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly within the skull. Recovery from concussion and its symptoms will vary. Avoiding re-injury and over-exertion until fully recovered are the cornerstones of proper concussion management. Concussions can impact a student's academic performance as well as their athletic pursuits. As such, the District supports the proper evaluation and management of concussion injuries.

Concussion Management Team (CMT)

The District may establish a concussion management team (CMT) which may be composed of the Athletic Director and/or Director of Physical Education, a school nurse, the school physician/District's Medical Director/Liaison, a coach of an interscholastic team and/or physical education teacher, a certified athletic trainer, and other appropriate personnel as designated by the District. If established, the CMT will oversee and implement the District's concussion policy, including the requirement that all school coaches, physical education teachers, school nurses, and certified athletic trainers who work with and/or provide instruction to students engaged in school-sponsored athletic activities complete training relating to MTBIs. Furthermore, every CMT may establish and implement a program which provides information on MTBIs to parents and persons in parental relation (parents) throughout each school year.

Staff Training/Course of Instruction

Each school coach, physical education teacher, school nurse, and certified athletic trainer who works with and/or provides instruction to students in school-sponsored athletic activities will complete a training every two years relating to recognizing the symptoms of concussions or MTBIs and monitoring and seeking proper medical treatment for students who suffer from a concussion or MTBI. Since concussion symptoms may manifest themselves in any setting, all staff will be provided access to take the online training and be alert for students who may display or report concussion symptoms. Components of the training will include, but not be limited to:

a) The definition of MTBI;
b)Signs and symptoms of MTBI;
c)How MTBIs may occur;
d)Practices regarding prevention; and
e)Guidelines for the return to school and school activities for a student who has suffered an MTBI, even if the injury occurred outside of school.

(Continued)

SUBJECT:
CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT (Cont'd.)

The District may, in collaboration with their medical director, allow district staff who are appropriately licensed or certified health care professionals and credentialed to use validated neurocognitive computerized testing to review and obtain baseline and post-concussion performance data. These tools are not a replacement for a medical evaluation to diagnose a concussion or clear a student to return to activities. The District must obtain authorization from the parent prior to the testing. Additionally, parents should be given a copy of the results.

Return to School Activities and Athletics

A student will not return to physical activity (including athletics, physical education class, and recess) until they have been evaluated and received written and signed authorization from a licensed provider. This written authorization should be sent to the school for review by the District's Medical Director. Additionally, the District's Medical Director has the final authority to clear students to participate in or return to extraclass athletic activities. All authorizations will be kept on file in the student's permanent health record. The standards for return to athletic activity will also apply to injuries that occur outside of school. Staff should be aware that students may exhibit concussion symptoms caused by injuries from outside activities and that these visible symptoms also indicate a removal from play.

The District will follow any directives issued by the student's treating physician with regard to limitations and restrictions on school and athletic activities for the student. The District will also develop a coordinated communication plan among appropriate staff to ensure that the private provider's orders for post-concussion management are implemented and followed, and for students to resume participation in athletic activities with the District's Medical Director approval. The school nurse will work to ensure that all the necessary staff get the information they need to care for and work with the injured student.

The District's Medical Director and other licensed health care professionals employed by the District will also establish a procedure and treatment plan to be utilized by district staff who may respond to students or staff with possible concussions during the school day or at a school-sponsored athletic event.

In accordance with NYSED guidelines, this policy will be both reviewed and updated at least every three years or with updates to guidance. The Superintendent, in consultation with the District's Medical Director and other appropriate staff, may develop regulations and protocols for strategies to prevent concussions, the identification of concussions, and procedures for removal from and return to activities or academics.

Education Law Section 305(42)
8 NYCRR Sections 135.4 and 136.5
Guidelines for Concussion Management in Schools, NYSED Guidance Document, 2023
Adoption Date: 12/19/18
Revised and Updated: 5/20/26

Appendix D

A FACT SHEET FOR

High School Parents

CDC HEADS UP
SAFE BRAIN. STRONGER FUTURE.

This sheet has information to help protect your teens from concussion or other serious brain injury.

What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

How Can I Help Keep My Teens Safe?

Sports are a great way for teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
  - Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
  - Emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
  - Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
  - Tell your teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your teens that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. Even with a helmet, it is important for teens to avoid hits to the head.

How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?

Teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just "don't feel right" after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

Signs Observed by Parents

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events *prior to* or *after* a hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Teens

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

Talk with your teens about concussion. Tell them to report their concussion symptoms to you and their coach right away. Some teens think concussions aren't serious or worry that if they report a concussion they will lose their position on the team or look weak. Remind them that *it's better to miss one game than the whole season.*

GOOD TEAMMATES KNOW:
IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

CDC

cdc.gov/HEADSUP

CONCUSSIONS AFFECT EACH TEEN DIFFERENTLY.

While most teens with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks, some will have symptoms for months or longer. Talk with your teens' healthcare provider if their concussion symptoms do not go away or if they get worse after they return to their regular activities.

Plan ahead. What do you want your teen to know about concussion?

What Are Some More Serious Danger Signs to Look Out For?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1, or take your teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching)
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously

What Should I Do If My Teen Has a Possible Concussion?

As a parent, if you think your teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your teen from play.
2. Keep your teen out of play the day of the injury. Your teen should be seen by a healthcare provider and only return to play with permission from a healthcare provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Ask your teen's healthcare provider for written instructions on helping your teen return to school. You can give the instructions to your teen's school nurse and teacher(s) and return-to-play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a healthcare provider should assess a teen for a possible concussion. You may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days. A teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a healthcare provider.

Teens who continue to play while having concussion symptoms or who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—have a greater chance of getting another concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs while the brain is still healing from the first injury can be very serious, and can affect a teen for a lifetime. It can even be fatal.

Revised January 2019

To learn more,
go to **cdc.gov/HEADSUP**

CDC HEADS UP

Appendix E

Return to School/Play Procedures

Once a student diagnosed with a concussion has been symptom free at rest for at least 24 hours, a private medical provider may choose to clear the student to begin a graduated return to activities. If a district has concerns or questions about the private medical provider's orders, the district medical director should contact that provider to discuss and clarify. Additionally, the medical director has the final authority to clear students to participate in or return to extra-class physical activities in accordance with 8NYCRR 135.4(c)(7)(i).

Students should be monitored by district staff daily following each progressive challenge, physical or cognitive, for any return of signs and symptoms of concussion. Staff members should report any observed return of signs and symptoms to the school nurse, certified athletic trainer, or administration in accordance with district policy. A student should only move to the next level of activity if they remain symptom free at the current level. Return to activity should occur with the introduction of one new activity each 24 hours. If any post-concussion symptoms return, the student should drop back to the previous level of activity, then re- attempt the new activity after another 24 hours have passed. A more gradual progression should be considered based on individual circumstances and a private medical provider's or other specialist's orders and recommendations.

<u>The following is a recommended sample return to physical activity protocol</u>:

Phase 1- low impact, non-strenuous, light aerobic activity, such as walking or riding a stationary bike. If tolerated without return of symptoms over a 24 hour period proceed to;

Phase 2- higher impact, higher exertion, and moderate aerobic activity such as running or jumping rope. No resistance training. If tolerated without return of symptoms over a 24 hour period proceed to;

Phase 3- Sport specific non-contact activity. Low resistance, weight training with a spotter. If tolerated without return of symptoms over a 24 hour period proceed to;

Phase 4- Sport specific activity, non-contact drills. Higher resistance weight training with a spotter. If tolerated without return of symptoms over a 24 hour period proceed to;

Phase 5- Full contact training drills and intense aerobic activity. If tolerated without return of symptoms over a 24 hour period proceed to;

Phase 6- Return to full activities without restrictions.