

**THOMAS JEFFERSON
HIGH SCHOOL**



**STUDENT ATHLETE
HANDBOOK**

2019-2020

AGE

To participate on a high school team (grade 9-12) you must not have reached your 19th birthday by the June 30th immediately preceding the school year. To participate on a junior high team (grades 7-9 or 9th only) you must not have reached your 16th birthday by the June 30th immediately preceding the school year.

AMATEUR STATUS

To be eligible for an interscholastic sport, you must be an amateur in that sport. You will lose your amateur status in a sport for at least one year if:

1. You or your school or an organization which you represent, or your parent or guardian, receive money or property for or related to your athletic ability performance, participation or service.
2. You accept compensation for teaching, training or coaching a sport. You may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities, or for serving as a lifeguard at swimming areas.

You may receive awards only from your school, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media or a non-profit organization approved by your principal. Permissible awards are a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, jersey, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque or similar trophy.

INJURIES

Any athlete who is treated by a physician for an injury or illness during or prior to a sport season is required to obtain a physician's release before they are permitted to participate in practices or contests. The release must be from a licensed medical physician who is the attending physician of record. A medical release from a chiropractor will not be accepted. All student-athletes must have completed a PIAA pre-participation physical

(CIPPE) form prior to the start of their sport season. Physicals are good for one school calendar year from June 1 – May 31.

If a student is receiving school attendance/academic accommodations for a concussion, they cannot attend practices or contests until those accommodations have been removed. Prior to participation, the student must return to a normal class schedule including participation in physical education class. They also must have a full medical release to return. Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion must complete the return to play protocol with the TJHS Certified Athletic Trainers prior to being released in any capacity.

TRANSPORTATION

Athletes must travel to and from away contests in transportation provided by the school district. Athletes are not permitted to drive on their own or ride to/from away contests with a friend or their parents. Situations may occur where, through no attempt to circumvent this rule, an athlete must be driven by a parent. This is acceptable, provided the parent notifies the athletic office or the coach in writing prior to the event.

EQUIPMENT

Students are responsible for all equipment issued including uniforms and practice clothing. They are expected to return all equipment/uniforms at the end of the season and will be required to pay replacement costs for any items that are not returned or are returned in unsatisfactory condition. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the school district practice and competitions. Students are not to use athletic equipment or clothing for gym classes or for participation on teams outside of school. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to your coach, not the athletic office.

Within one week after the close of a season the coach and/or equipment manager will conduct a uniform return. Failure to return equipment or uniforms will result in the following:

1. Notification to parent/guardian of what is owed.
2. Withholding of report card or awards until uniform/equipment return obligation is met.

3. Students will not be permitted to participate in subsequent sports seasons until all equipment or uniform debts from previous seasons are collected or reimbursement is made.

LETTER AWARDS

Requirements for earning a varsity letter are established by each coach with the approval of the Athletic Department. Each Coach will determine criteria for earning a letter. Letter awards are achievement awards, not participation awards and will be distributed as such.

SCHOOL/PRACTICE ATTENDANCE

A student must be in school by 8:59 A.M. in order to participate in a contest or practice session. A student may not practice or play if he/she is absent from school the day of practice or contest unless approved by the Athletic Director or Principal. A student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of their absence. Frequent tardiness to school may result in cancellation of participation privileges. Students with early dismissals must return to school following their appointment to be eligible to participate in a contest or practice that day. If a student is absent from school on a Friday, they are not permitted to attend practice or contests over the weekend.

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has been in attendance for a total of 45 days following his/her 20th day of absence. If the 20th absence occurs in the final semester, the required 45 days of attendance may continue into the following school year before they are eligible. The exception is where there is a consecutive absence of 5 or more school days due to confining illness, injury or quarantine with a physician's excuse. Attendance at summer schools does not count toward the 45 days.

Attendance at practices during the season is mandatory and under the discretion of the coach and Athletic Director. Failure to comply with the attendance policies of the coach can result in dismissal from the team.

In the event a student-athlete is suspended from school, they are unable to attend, practice or play in contests throughout the duration of the suspension including the final day. School suspension is considered complete when the student returns to their normal class schedule. All class work must be kept current during suspensions. If the suspension occurs prior to a school break, the student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of the break.

DRESS CODE

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, you are representing the community and Thomas Jefferson High School. The way you look and dress is a direct reflection on the district and your family. As such, you are expected to wear clothes that are clean and appropriate. Coaches have the right to set more specific standards than outlined above.

INITIATION/HAZING/BULLYING/BEHAVIOR/SOCIAL MEDIA

Under no circumstances will initiations, hazing or bullying of any kind be tolerated. Any student involved in hazing, initiation or bullying of another student will be dismissed from the team and appropriately dealt with under the West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy.

This will include all types of bullying including cyber bullying and social media bullying. Students will be held accountable for all social media posts and could face team discipline if warranted. Threats or malicious statements toward another student or coach will be considered bullying and will result in consequences.

It is a privilege to participate in interscholastic athletics and with that privilege comes certain responsibilities. As an advocate for technology, the district also recognizes the role social media plays in communication and outreach. It is the expectation that our student-athletes will use social media

in a positive and respectful manner to engage with family, friends and the community. Disrespectful, insulting, abusive and or threatening content, be it original, re-posted, re-tweeted, or liked, has no place in Thomas Jefferson Athletics and will not be tolerated. Student-athletes who post offensive commentary or content directed at opponents, officials, team members or coaches will be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension from all team activities. It is a privilege to represent Thomas Jefferson High School in interscholastic competition and we hold our student-athletes to the highest standards for integrity and ethical decisions.

Social Media Reminders

- *Nothing is private! Even though you may utilize privacy tools, everything you post online is public information.
- *Your content is your thumbprint... Once you post something, it is linked to you forever.
- *Your audience is global. Consider the appropriateness of your content as your audience is young children, peers and adults. Young children often imitate the actions of those older.
- *Who is watching? Always remember that college coaches, admissions and prospective employers often review social media sites to gauge the character of the student.

In the event that a student athlete becomes aware of any situation involving these types of activities, they must report it to their coach immediately.

Students are expected to show appropriate behavior at all times. Good sportsmanship is an expectation for all student athletes. All games/practices whether home or away are considered school events. As such, all district rules and regulations apply. The same shall apply on buses or other modes of transportation.

PERIOD OF PARTICIPATION

A pupil shall not represent his/her school in interscholastic athletics if they have surpassed any of the following prior to this year.

1. Been in attendance more than 6 semesters beyond the 8th grade.
2. Played six seasons beyond the sixth grade in any sport.
3. Played four seasons beyond the eighth grade in any sport
4. Completed the work of grade nine, ten, eleven and twelve inclusive.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

The athletic office will conduct a weekly grade check. In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics and cheerleading, a student must have passed or be passing at least four full credit subjects, or the equivalent. Back work may be made up providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the district. Student-athletes who attend Steel Center Vo-Tech must have passed or be passing two full credit classes at Thomas Jefferson High School and be passing their classes at Steel Center. In the event the student is not passing four credits, they are ineligible to practice or play in contests until the next grade check.

In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards above, the student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics or cheerleading for the first fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period.

At the end of the school year, the student's final credits in his/her subjects rather than his credits for the last grading period shall be used to determine his eligibility for the following year. Student who are ineligible to end the year are not permitted to begin sports in the subsequent season until they have attended school for 15 days and have become eligible.

The approved grading scale of the West Jefferson Hills School District will be used in determining academic eligibility. An "I" grade and/or an "F" grade will be considered not passing. The Athletic Director will inform the player and the coach if they are ineligible to participate.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

The possession, use, furnishing or transmission of narcotics, stimulant drugs, alcoholic beverages, steroids or other unauthorized substances and the use of any tobacco or vaping products by student-athletes is strictly prohibited. The West Jefferson Hills School District discipline policy will be applied where there is an infraction dealing with drugs, alcohol or tobacco use.

If a student athlete is cited by the police or other authorities for the use of drugs or alcohol, the coach has the authority to administer additional team discipline.

SUMMARY

This handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of rules and regulations governing our interscholastic programs. This handbook is not all-inclusive. There are many rules and regulations that are not included. Each coach, however, has the right to make reasonable rules more stringent than those listed in this book. Any rules not addressed in this handbook will revert to the student handbook for clarification.

Please do not hesitate to contact your coach or Athletic Director for any questions or clarification of a rule regarding your participation in our interscholastic athletic programs.

The West Jefferson Hills School District hopes you enjoy your participation in the athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson High School. We are proud of our Jaguar teams and all those student-athletes representing our district. Please remember that what you do and how you act is a direct reflection on your family, school and community.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

TOGETHER BUILDING BETTER PROGRAMS FOR THE STUDENTS OF WEST JEFFERSON HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP

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 greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our programs, 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
2. Expectations the coach has for your child, as well as all the players on the squad in regards to rules and regulations.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, I.E., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
5. Procedure should your child be injured during practice or contests.
6. Discipline which results in the denial of your child to participate.

COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Concerns expressed directly to coach or assistant coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concern in regards to a coach's expectation for your child.

As your children become involved in their athletic programs at Thomas Jefferson 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 or your child wishes. This is all part of growing as a young person and building character. It teaches them how to deal with adversity and persevere through it.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Perceived mistreatment of your child.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Playing time.
2. Team Strategy
3. Play Calling
4. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between a coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN TO DISCUSS WITH A COACH, THE PROCEDURE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW:

1. Call or email the coach to set up an appointment. It is expected that your child will attend the meeting with you.
2. You must always follow the proper chain of command. Assistant Coach, Head Coach, AD, Principal. Please do not contact the Superintendent or school board members in regards to athletic concerns.
3. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

Since research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, these programs have been established. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided within this booklet makes both your child's and your experience with the Thomas Jefferson High School athletic program enjoyable and rewarding.

PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT
(PA State Athletic Directors Association)

- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that participation in sports is a privilege that should never be taken for granted; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents should provide a supportive, positive athletic environment where children will be able to enjoy sports' participation and maintain a proper perspective concerning winning; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents should allow and encourage their children to experience fun in their participation on athletic teams and minimize the pressure on them. The focus should be to learn the lessons' in life and to be a positive team member; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents should teach their children to model respectful behavior, to handle frustrations and to understand what is best for the team rather than what is the athlete's personal best interest; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that athletes should be given the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports so that they can be introduced to multiple skills that are necessary for athletic development; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents should be positive role models especially with regards to good sportsmanship. They need to demonstrate respect to parents, team members, coaches and officials. Public confrontation should be avoided. Parents should refrain from crossing the line from being a supportive to being a negative and adversarial parent. Athletes need to compete without parental coaching from the sidelines; and
- WHEREAS P.S.A.D.A. believes that adults need to separate their ego from the accomplishments of their children. Adults also need to view money and time dedicated on a child's sports experience as an investment in which children demonstrate a positive and admirable effort and not an investment on which they expect a monetary return; and
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents should always provide unconditional love and support regardless of the athletic performance of their child. Mistakes made in competition should not result in negative responses from a parent; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT P.S.A.D.A. believes that parents need to teach their children to embrace their role as a team member and to reinforce the importance of always focusing on the elements that they can control – attitude, effort and contributions to the team. Children need to honor the game in which they are participating and competing with integrity.



The Role of the Parent in Sports

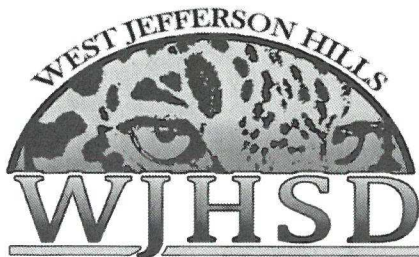
Top 10 Parenting Do's

10. **Reinforce with your child to be a good sport.** For example emphasize shaking hands after games no matter how bitter the contest, and never belittling someone to make yourself feel better.
9. **Limit your conversations about sport.** Let them know you are interested, but also interested in all aspects of their lives!
8. **Have realistic expectations for your child's success in sport.** Try to be objective when your child is not receiving playing time or starting; or they struggle with their performances. They are not mini-adults; they are maturing young people who make many mistakes as well as doing many great things (sometimes in the same day!).
7. **Support the coach and don't try to coach your child!** Especially from the stands during a game. Coaching your child, unless you are a part of the coaching staff, makes it very easy to confuse and frustrate the child. It can undermine the coach and destroy coach-athlete trust.
6. **Keep it fun.** Try not to take sport too seriously. You will ruin it for your child and they will feel pressure if you are too critical, controlling, or overbearing. Keep it light!
5. **Push to follow through on commitments, work hard, and be a good person.** This is the time to challenge your child – when they want to take a short cut that does not show commitment to the team or the coach. Pushing, however, to win is not healthy and will only create issues between you and your child.
4. **Have them play for their reasons, not yours.** Keep in mind that your child wants to be independent from you in some ways, and yet have your support. For certain, in sport let their goals drive the level of involvement. This will lead to less frustration and arguments.
3. **Remain calm and composed during games.** Avoid yelling at officials. High school athletes find it very frustrating and embarrassing when parents yell at officials, or lose their composure in the stands. There is enough pressure on these kids to perform as it is. Your added pressure from reacting to mistakes they make, being critical and negative, and just too emotional create unneeded stress and take away from the fun of the game.
2. **Support, support, support!** Support your child in many different ways. Listen to them when they need to be heard after a tough game or practice. Challenge them when they are exhibiting a bad attitude. Confirm what they are going through is normal in sport. Be empathetic. Never make them feel guilty about "your sacrifices" for them to play. There are some many more ways to support than just paying for them to play, transporting them, or giving them tactical advice.
1. **Make your love and support unconditional and never contingent on performance.** The biggest issues between parents and their children often come when the parent makes the child feel like their encouragement and love is contingent on their performances. No matter how your son or daughter plays be encouraging, give them a hug, let them know you love them even if they go 0 for 5, have five big turnovers, or take bad penalties. The coach will get on them about their execution; the parent needs to play his or her role and support.



The Role of the Parent in Sports

- 3. Consider your child's sport an investment for which you should receive something in return.** With pay-to-play high school sport becoming ever more commonplace it is easy to fall into this trap. Parents make an investment in time, money, transportation as well as emotional investment. However, do your best to not make your child feel like they need to perform because of your investment. Let them know that you will happily do all of these things no matter how they perform.
- 2. Exert pressure to win.** This is a no-brainer. When you, the parent, pressure to win you are creating an expectation that your child does not have complete control over. This expectation creates stress and negative emotion for the child. Again, focus on effort, sportsmanship, and things they can control. Then they can feel like a success in your eyes. Ultimately, that's what every child longs for.
- 1. Put your interests ahead of your child's interests.** If your child is playing high school or middle school sport, be supportive. Go to games and encourage them. Listen to them discuss their triumphs and frustrations. And, always and always let them play for their own reasons not yours. Maybe you were an intense, driven athlete and maybe your child is not, and instead is happy with being a role player and spending time with his friends. It's his life let him live it. There is a fine line here. You want to teach your child to commit to a goal and pursue it with hard work and dedication. However, if your child has not shown the intense interest in a sport and has not for some time, save your self and your child the pain. Instead, push on striving academically – in a positive way, of course.



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WEST ELIZABETH - JEFFERSON HILLS - PLEASANT HILLS

PETE MURPHY
Principal

PAUL WARE
Assistant Principal

ADAM KNARESBOROUGH
Assistant Principal

**ABSENCE DUE TO APPROVED SCHOOL BUSINESS
THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL**

The student is required to secure assignments from subject teachers and keep abreast of academic work during this absence. All assignments are due the day of return to school.

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PUPIL PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL TRIP OR TOUR:

MY CHILD _____ HAS MY PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE

IN THE PROPOSED TRIP TO _____
(place to be visited)

ON _____ 2019-2020 _____
(dates)

PERMISSION IS ALSO GRANTED TO AUTHORIZE MEDICAL CARE IN THE EVENT OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY WHEN PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) CANNOT BE CONTACTED.

TRANSPORTATION VIA (CHECK ONE):

SCHOOL BUS X COMMERCIAL CARRIER X PRIVATE VEHICLE X

(signature of parent/guardian)

(date)

(home phone)

(cell phone)

(business phone)

NOTE: PUPILS ON FIELD TRIPS ARE REPRESENTING THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY. WITH THIS IN MIND, THEY ARE REQUIRED TO DRESS AND BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY. PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND TRAVEL TO ACTIVITIES IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT. I FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT POSSESSIONS AND/OR VEHICLES ARE SUBJECT TO SURVEILLANCE AND POSSIBLE INSPECTION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

It is the policy of the West Jefferson Hills School District to not discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, age, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 5094 and Title VI. For information regarding services, activities, programs, and facilities that are accessible to and usable by handicapped persons or about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Director of Human Resources at 412-655-8450 x2228.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR COACH

I HAVE READ THE ATHLETE'S HANDBOOK AND WILL UPHOLD THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS. I UNDERSTAND THE PENALTIES THAT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR ABUSING THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING A PART OF THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT AT THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL.

Student's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date