

# Parent Athletic Handbook



**Being a Sport/Activities Parent**  
*A Guide to a Successful Experience*  
*South Hamilton Schools*

The purpose of this handbook is to assist the parents and guardians of the student athletes/activity participants of South Hamilton Schools. ***Being a parent can be a difficult and trying experience for both the parents...and the children.*** Participation in high schools sports activities can be a fulfilling and positive life experience if everyone has a better understanding of the issues and concerns that surround students' participation in interscholastic activities.

In order to ensure that the educational experience that your son or daughter has while participating in our athletic/activities programs are positive, we feel that it is vital that we share this information with you. We hope that you will find this information both informative and beneficial

The South Hamilton Administration, Sponsors and Coaches

***“Parents want to coach; coaches want to officiate; officials want to watch. You can only do one. CHOOSE...choose what your child needs most.”***

***Bruce Brown – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics***

**What are YOUR goals for your child in sports/activity?  
(Divide 100 points among the following choices)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn to play the sport or participate in the activity

\_\_\_\_\_ Win

\_\_\_\_\_ Gain increased self-confidence

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn to deal with defeat

\_\_\_\_\_ Physical Fitness

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn "life lessons"

\_\_\_\_\_ Have fun

\_\_\_\_\_ Make friends

\_\_\_\_\_ Earn a college scholarship

\_\_\_\_\_ Become a good athlete/activity participate

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify):

100 TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**WHY KIDS PARTICIPATE  
IN A SPORT or ACTIVITY**

*As per Michigan State University (1989)*

1. **Having fun**
2. Improving skills
3. Develop fitness/exercise
4. Being with my friends
5. Experiencing thrills and excitement
6. Being on a team
7. Opportunities for personal accomplishment
8. Staying in shape
9. Undertaking something I'm good at
10. Winning

**TOP REASONS WHY KIDS QUIT A SPORT OR ACTIVITY**

1. **Not having fun**
2. **Too much pressure from parents and peers**
3. Too much emphasis on winning
4. Concerns about coach/sponsoring or the sponsor
5. Not getting enough playing time

## Interscholastic Athletics vs. Professional Athletics

It is very important that everyone understands the purpose of high school sports and not confuse them with collegiate or professional sports. Interscholastic high school sports/activities are classrooms that teach young people many values and characteristics that cannot be found in any other educational setting. South Hamilton SHOULD BE about the *"Pursuit of Victory with Honors."* and the efforts that are necessary to compete/participate. Unfortunately, the examples that we witness on the newscasts and on televised sports are a different model, a "Professional" model that does not reflect the goals of high school sports/activity.

<b>Interscholastic - Educational</b>	<b>Professional Model — Business</b>
<p><b>Teaching</b> Athletics/activities are tools that schools use to teach core values that will benefit students in their adult lives.</p>	<p><b>Entertainment</b> Winning is most important because it sells tickets and fills the stadiums and theaters. The financial aspects of <u>business and profits are their motivation.</u></p>
<p>Teaching life lessons is most important, even at the expense of winning</p>	<p>Winning is most important.</p>
<p><b>Behavior Expectations</b> Athletics and activities promote character development in our students. Coaches/sponsors and sponsors include behavior, character and attitude as part of the evaluation process.</p>	<p><b>Performance Expectations</b> Performance expectations, not behavioral expectations. Do your job during the contest. Win and be entertaining. (This is why you see poor examples on TV)</p>
<p>Teams, activity members, athletes and coach/sponsor are an important aspect of a comprehensive high school. Coaches/sponsors are teachers; their classroom is on the fields, in the gyms and on the stage.</p>	<p>Teams, athletes and coach/sponsor are commodities.</p>

## What We Believe About High School Activities

### *"Pursuing Victory with Honors"*

At its best, athletic and activity competition can hold intrinsic values for our society. It is a symbol of a great ideal: pursuing victory with honor. The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. In the belief that the impact of sports can and should enhance the character and uplift the ethics of the state, we have established a framework of principles and a common language of values that should be adopted and practiced widely.

- The essential elements of character building and ethics in SH sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: **trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring and good citizenship**. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."
- To foster the development of good character, school sports/activity programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical and ethical development of student athletes and teaches them positive life skills that will help them become personally successful and socially responsible.
- ***Participation in school sports/activity programs is a privilege, not a right.*** To earn that privilege, student athletes and activity members must abide by the rules and they must conduct themselves, on and off the field, as positive role models who exemplify good character.
- Everyone involved with SH competitions/presentations; parents, spectators, associated student body leaders and all other groups have a duty to honor the traditions of the sport/activity and to treat other participants with respect. Coaches/sponsors have a special responsibility to model respectful behavior and the duty to demand that their athlete's refrain from disrespectful conduct including verbal abuse of opponents and officials profane or belligerent trash-talking, taunting and inappropriate celebrations.
- The profession of coach/sponsoring/sponsoring is a profession of teaching. In addition to teaching the mental and physical dimensions of their sport/activity, coach/sponsor, through words and example, must also strive to build the character of their athletes/participants by teaching them to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fairness, caring and good citizens.

## What Parents Can Do

### **Before the Game/event**

- > Tell your child you are proud of him or her regardless of how well he or she plays/performed.
- > Make a commitment to honor the game/event no matter what others may do.

### **During the Game/event**

- > Cheer /support good plays/performances by all.
- > Mention good calls by the officials to others.
- > Encourage others to honor the game/event.
- > Remember to have fun! Enjoy the day.

### **After the Game**

Ask your child open-ended questions:

- > "What was the most enjoyable part of the game /event for you? Least enjoyable?"
- > "Do you feel you gave it your best effort?"
- > "How did you respond to any mistakes you made?"
- > "Did you bounce back?"
- > "What did you learn from the game/event or activity?"
- > Tell your child again that you are proud of him or her! (Especially if the game/event didn't go well)
- > Thank officials for doing a difficult job.
- > Thank the coach/sponsor for their effort.

### **What If**

- > The official makes a "bad" call against your team? ***Respect and Honor the Game—be silent!***
- > Another spectator on your team begins to berate the official? Ask them to Respect and Honor the Game, ***that officials are human and make mistakes.***
- > Your child does not get to play/participate in the game/event? Review the reasons why kids play sports or participate on page 3.

# What Parents Can Expect from Their School

Communications you should expect from your child's coach/sponsor/sponsor:

1. Philosophy of the coach/sponsor
2. Expectations the coach/sponsor has for your child
3. Location and times of all practices and games
4. Team requirements, i.e. practices, special equipment, out of season training
5. Procedures to follow should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation

## **Communications that coach/sponsors expect from parents:**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach/sponsor
2. Specific concerns with regard to a coach/sponsors philosophy and /or expectations
3. Notification of any illness or injury or missed practices

## **Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coach/sponsors:**

1. 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 not playing as much as you may hope. Coach/sponsors are teachers. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the above list, certain things can and should be discussed with the coach/sponsor. Other things, such as the ones listed below, must be left to the professional judgment of the coach/sponsor.

## **Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coach/sponsor:**

1. Playing Time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student athlete



There are often situations that may require a conference between the coach/sponsor and the parents. The student athlete will be invited and involved in these meetings. To resolve the problem, we must have everyone's help and involvement. ***These meetings are encouraged, but must be held and conducted as per the following guidelines.***

**If there is a problem:**

1. Have your son/daughter talk to the coach/sponsor, one on one (it is part of growing up).

**If this does not resolve the problem, the parents should:**

1. Call the school and request a returned call or a face-to-face meeting with the coach/sponsor.
2. Coach/sponsor will make time available in their day to meet with students and parents.

**Parents are to NEVER:**

1. *Confront the coach/sponsor before/after practice*
2. *Confront the coach/sponsor before or after a game*

**Coach/sponsors are teachers...and people.** A parent would not walk into a classroom during class time and yell at the teacher about a poor grade, so please do not confront the coach/sponsor in public setting. There are proper ways to communicate and have your concerns addressed. Practices and games are highly emotional times for everyone involved, players, coach/sponsors and parents. Meetings and concerns do not get resolved during emotional times.

**What to do if the meeting with the coach/sponsor did not provide a satisfactory resolution:** Call the school Activities Director. The Activities Director will attempt to mediate a resolution. We hope this information helps make your child's and your experience with the athletic program less stressful and more enjoyable.



## THINGS PARENTS DO THAT EMBARRASS THEIR KIDS!

- "Trying to teach me how to do something 'correctly' after a game."
- "Coaching during games even though you aren't the coach."
- "Telling me what I was doing wrong after every game/event/activity."
- "Being asked to leave a field by an official."
- "Going crazy at the refs — because it is not your job. It is the coach's job to question bad calls."
- "Taunting other players, opponents, refs."
- "Yelling things at coaches and getting involved with something that was between the coach and me. It was none of their business."
- "Coming to a game/event drunk or after drinking."
- "Acting disappointed with what I am doing instead of reassuring me I will do better next time."
- "Getting a technical foul against our team."
- "Don't say, (nickname), you really look cute in your uniform, honey'!"



## THINGS PARENTS DO THAT THEIR KIDS REALLY APPRECIATE!

- "Taking time out of your busy schedules to come to games and support what we do!"
- \* "Bringing snacks after a game."
- "Supporting the whole team, not just me."
- "Cheering the team even when losing badly."
- "Telling us we did a good job."
- "Being proud of us even when we didn't win."
- "Being quiet unless cheering with everyone else."
- \* "Never yelling at a coach or ref."
- \* "Making friends with the other parents."
- \* "Telling a "negative" parent to be quiet"

Tom Doyle in his work entitled – *The Sport Parent's Manual*

**Always remember...**

**Your behavior, actions, and words will make a difference...in your child's life.**

**It is yours to determine if they will be considered as positive or negative...now and for all the years to come.**