



Student/Parent Athletics Policy Handbook

(Revised August 2017)

PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS

Interscholastic athletics at Ellsworth Community School (ECS) are vital and integral parts of the total education program. Many of the character traits required to be a successful athletic participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. The purpose of interscholastic athletics is to make a positive contribution to the development of the participants, spectators, school and community.

As an integral part of the educational process, the athletic program should always support the objectives and standards of the school. Education should always take precedence over athletics. Athletes should strive for educational excellence, playing excellence, as well as staying within the boundaries of good sportsmanship

The Ellsworth Community School Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, age, religion, height, weight, marital or family status, military status, ancestry, genetic information, or any other legally protected characteristic, (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its programs and activities, including employment opportunities. The following person is designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies of the District or to address any complaint of discrimination: Superintendent, 9467 Park Street, Ellsworth, Michigan, 49729; (231) 588-2544.

SPORTS OFFERED at ECS

High School

Fall

- Cross Country (boys and girls)
- Football (cooperative program with Central Lake Public Schools)
- Volleyball (girls)

Winter

- Basketball (boys and girls)

Spring

- Baseball
- Softball
- Track and Field (boys and girls)

Middle School

Fall

- Basketball (boys and girls)
- Cross Country (boys and girls)

Winter

- Volleyball (girls)

Spring

- Track and Field (boys and girls)

Contact Information

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Athletic Secretary – Stephanie Murray – (231) 588-2544 x 10; dsmurray@ellsworth.k12.mi.us

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General Information

1.1 ATHLETIC ATTENDANCE POLICY

All student athletes must be in attendance for a full day of school on the day of the athletic event (contest or practice). Exceptions may be granted (doctor's appointment, funeral, family emergency) on an individual basis. In such cases every effort must be made to have the absence pre-approved by either the athletic director or superintendent. In the event that an absence is inadvertently overlooked and the student-athlete participates in a contest contrary to this policy, he/she must miss the next contest.

1.2 INJURY AND LIABILITY

ECS does not assume financial responsibility for medical, hospital, or ambulance expenses incurred because of athletic injuries. Athletics is a voluntary program in which the student may participate if he/she so desires, but the student does so at his/her own risk of injury.

If an athlete is injured and needs medical attention, the coach will contact his/her parents. For injuries requiring medical attention, a **doctor's written permission** must be submitted to the coach and/or athletic director before the student will be allowed to return to practice or competition.

1.3 CONCUSSION AWARENESS

The number one priority of Ellsworth Community School is to maintain safety and well-being of its students and athletes. To that end, all staff, coaches, and administrators have received concussion awareness training. In addition, we require all students and parents to receive, read, and acknowledge materials pertaining to concussions. In the forms section of this handbook you will find two documents related to concussions; (1) Understanding Concussions, and (2) a Concussion Awareness acknowledgement form. In order to participate in athletics, all parents must sign and return the concussion acknowledgement form prior to beginning active participation.

1.4 PARENT GUIDELINES

Parents should feel free to have open, constructive discussions with coaches on issues relating to their child. Issues that are inappropriate for parents to discuss with a coach include the child's playing time, coaching strategy or play calling, or other student-athletes.

Parents should never discuss anything with a coach in the "heat of the moment" and should wait 24-hours before contacting a coach on an issue. If either party wishes, the athletic director may be contacted to assist in a meeting to discuss an issue.

Follow these tips for making sure your child has a positive sports experience. Have your child at all practices and games on time. Practice with your child at home. Come to games as often as you can, cheer positively, allow the coach to coach, and let the officials officiate. Compliment your child. **Above all else, remember that this is your child's game.**

1.5 PHYSICALS

All student-athletes must have a physical on file with the office before beginning participation in any sport. Student-athletes who do not have a physical on file are not allowed to participate in any organized team event, practice, or contest.

1.6 PARTICIPATION FEES

The ECS Board of Education has a written policy regarding pay-to-play athletics. The cost to participate in athletics is as follows;

- High School – \$50 per student per sport (two sport yearly maximum, i.e. \$100/student/year cap)
- Middle School - \$35 per student/year one-time participation fee
- \$200 per year per family maximum

Student-athletes will NOT be allowed to participate in official contests (i.e. games) until either the above described athletic fee is paid, or other arrangements have been made (see below.)

If for some reason an individual family is unable to pay the participation fee, please contact either the Superintendent or Athletic Director to make other arrangements.

1.7 PLAYING TIME PHILOSOPHY

ECS is committed to offering an athletic program that will benefit students throughout their lives. These programs are extensions of the classroom. We have developed a philosophy for team sports playing time that will best enhance our athletic program and service our student-athletes simultaneously. The purpose of all athletic programs should be to provide eligible students an equal opportunity to participate in activities.

1. *Developmental Stage (middle school)*

The optimum goals at this stage include teaching fundamentals of the sport, emphasizing sportsmanship and to provide practice and game playing time for all participants in all contests. Winning can be discussed to build team pride, but should not be stressed as to circumvent the original aforementioned goals. All athletes will participate in contests a relatively equal amount of time.

2. *Post Developmental Stage (JV team)*

Coaches should balance student-athlete participation with the success of the team at this stage. Fundamentals in practice and sportsmanship are still goals for all participants. During games, personnel strategies can be made by the coaches to aid the success of the entire team. However, every effort will be made to provide as much playing time as possible, but this may not be feasible in every contest.

3. *Varsity Stage (varsity teams)*

The success of the team is the main goal at this stage. Student-athletes should learn that in varsity athletics all participants are working together for the good of the unit. This is a lifetime skill. Game participation is handled exclusively by the coaching staff and although playing time will be provided for as many student-athletes as possible, the success of the team will be paramount. Coaches should stress to all participants that each is an important contributor to the team in many ways, but playing time cannot be afforded equally to all. Maximum student-athlete game participation is stressed but not mandated at this level.

1.8 SNOW DAY POLICY

In the event of a snow day or other school cancelation no contests shall be held. Nor shall any mandatory practices be conducted for which the student-athlete shall be held accountable for attending. Voluntary practices may be scheduled on such days with the approval of the athletic director or superintendent.

1.9 ECS ATHLETICS SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Comments on blogs, online forums or social media sites about ECS games, players and coaches should promote the positive aspects regarding participating in athletics. ECS student-athletes and staff should be courteous and productive and avoid comments that are profane, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable.

Blogs and social media often foster debate of an issue; users are to engage in such exchanges with mutual respect for other's opinions. ECS student-athletes and staff should assume that all postings on social websites are publicly available on the Internet and therefore publicly accessible without limitation or protection of any kind. Please consider how much personal information to share, with the understanding that this is information may be linked to your name and published on the Internet.

Complaints submitted to the athletic director or superintendent regarding inappropriate comments made on social media sites could result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension and/or dismissal from the team.

1.10 TRANSPORTATION

It is required that all student-athletes travel to and return from away contests with the team on school provided transportation. This promotes team camaraderie and maximizes safety. If a student-athlete will not be returning with the team, the following steps must be taken:

1. Prior approval must be given by the coach, athletic director, or administrator
2. The student-athlete's parent/guardian must sign out with the coach after the event has concluded.

Student-athletes may only travel home from a contest with THEIR legal guardian

1.11 VACATION POLICY

Teams may hold practices during school vacation closures. Athletes must provide written permission from parents to coaches stating their reason for not attending these practices or games. Coaches are encouraged to keep practices to a minimum during vacation days. Playing time may be affected if a student misses practices or games during vacations.

Rules and Eligibility

2.1 6TH and 8TH GRADE PARTICIPATION ON MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS

Per MHSAA rules, when school enrollment numbers allow, ECS may choose to allow 6th grade students to participate on middle school teams. Discretion for this decision shall lie with the athletic director and the superintendent.

Per MHSAA rules, when school enrollment numbers allow, ECS may choose to move 8th grade students up to JV or varsity teams. In such a case, the following apply;

1. In the event that moving up an 8th student would damage the ability to field a middle school team the superintendent must approve the move.
2. Coaches do not have to invite all 8th grade students.
3. 8th grade students are able to play at both the JV/varsity and middle school levels in one season so long as long as they do not exceed the number of games played per season allowed by the MHSAA.

2.2 ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Previous Semester – All student-athletes must have passed a minimum of six classes (seminar not included) in the previous academic semester of enrollment in order to participate in sports.

Current Semester – All student-athletes must be passing with a D or better in all classes during the current academic semester of enrollment in order to participate in sports. The following procedures will be used to determine current semester eligibility.

- Every Thursday, all teachers will turn in eligibility sheets to the athletic secretary.
- Students who are marked ineligible by any individual teacher will receive a warning.
- Any student marked ineligible by an individual teacher for two or more consecutive weeks will be ineligible to participate in contests or travel with the team the following week (Monday-Saturday).

2.3 MHSAA ELIGIBILITY RULES from the MHSAA HANDBOOK

Enrollment – To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must be enrolled in a high school no later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st semester) or fourth Friday of February (2nd semester). A student must be enrolled in the school for which he/she competes.

Age – A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under nineteen (19) years of age with the exception being a student whose 19th birthday occurs on or after September 1st of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year.

Undergraduate Standing – A student who is a graduate of a regular four-year high school shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics.

Transfers – A student enrolled in grades 9-12 who transfers from one high school to another high school is ineligible to participate in an interscholastic athletic contest or scrimmage for 1 full semester in the school to which the student transfers unless they qualify under a transfer exception.

For a complete list of MHSAA rules and guidelines please contact the athletic director.

2.4 MHSAA ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Know and adhere to the athletic code of the school.
 2. Exceed all attendance and academic requirements as practical evidence of loyalty to school and team and a proper philosophy of school-sponsored athletics.
 3. Observe completely all policies regarding conduct, doing so as a duty to school, team and self.
 4. Counsel with the Athletic Director over questions of eligibility.
 5. Practice and play, giving complete effort in all circumstances and credit in victory to teammates and to opponents in defeat.
 6. Accept favorable and unfavorable decisions, as well as victory and defeat, with equal grace.
 7. Demonstrate respect for opponents and officials before, during, and after contests.
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2.5 DUAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Student-athletes in grades 6-12 are allowed to participate in two sports during the same season provided the following criteria are met:

1. Approval is given by the athletic director and all coaches involved.
2. The student-athlete selects a primary sport and a secondary sport
3. The student-athlete, their parents, and all coaches involved sign the dual sport participation agreement found in this handbook.

The following criteria will be used to determine which sport takes priority in the event of a scheduling conflict.

Contest vs. Contest

If contests are scheduled for the same day in both sports, the primary sport will take priority over the secondary sport with the following exception.

All MHSAA state tournaments are a priority regardless of which sport is the first sport. If both teams are participating in a MHSAA tournament on the same date, no attention to the level of tournament (districts, regional) shall be given and the primary sport is the priority. State tournaments are a priority over conference tournaments.

Under no circumstances shall a student-athlete participate in two contests on the same day. If games are rescheduled for any reason and it creates a same day conflict, all of the above shall be implemented.

Contest vs. Practice

All student-athletes are expected to participate in all contests (primary or secondary) regardless of a conflict with practice. A contest ALWAYS takes priority over a practice. If games are rescheduled for any reason and it creates a same day conflict, the preceding rule shall be implemented.

Practice vs. Practice

Coaches and the athletic director should make every effort to arrange practice times so that dual sports student-athletes have the ability to participate in both practices. In the event that practice times overlap, the primary sport's practice will have priority.

2.6 ESC ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

All students participating in athletics will conform to the following athletic code in reference to general conduct. The athletic code is in effect year-round (365 days/year) once a student has gone out for an activity.

No use or possession of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illicit drugs in any form at any time.

Violations of the Athletic Code shall be accumulative beginning with and throughout the student's participation in athletic activities for the duration of their ECS career. The penalties shall overlap seasons, if necessary.

First Offense

Option 1

- After confirmation of the first violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next two (2) consecutive athletic event dates or two (2) weeks of the season, whichever is greater.
- The student will be involved in an awareness-counseling program (at no cost to the school) that has been approved by the administration. (The program must contact the athletic director or principal to verify attendance)
- The student is expected to practice and attend the contests, but will not be allowed to dress in uniform or compete.
- Penalties shall not be considered served unless the student ends the season in good standing. Quitting or being removed from the team is not considered "serving the penalty".

Option 2

- After the confirmation of the first violation, the student will be suspended from participation for five (5) consecutive athletic event dates or five (5) weeks of the season, whichever is greater.
- The student is expected to practice and attend the contests, but will not be allowed to dress in uniform or compete.
- Penalties shall not be considered served unless the student ends the season in good standing. Quitting or being removed from the team is not considered "serving the penalty".

Self-Disclosure: A student who, by himself/herself or together with his/her parent or legal guardian, voluntarily discloses to the athletic director, principal, or superintendent a violation of this section prior to any reports, charges, complaints, or investigation under the Athletic Code will face the following disciplinary action. The student shall lose eligibility for the next athletic event date or a week of the season, whichever is greater and shall be required to follow the awareness counseling program outlined in option #1. This self-disclosure exemption is available to a student only on the first offense during their Ellsworth athletic career. Failure to be totally forthcoming or lying about actual events will result in the forfeiture of the "Self-Disclosure" and will result in full disciplinary action.

Second Offense

- After confirmation of the second violation, the student shall lose eligibility for one calendar year.

Third Offense

- After confirmation of the third or subsequent violation, the student shall lose eligibility at ECS permanently.

Appeal Procedures

- Parents/guardians of student athletes that have been found guilty of violating rules in the Athletic Code of Conduct will be notified by phone and via the mail regarding actions taken by the athletic director. Any appeal of the decision shall be made in writing and delivered to the athletic director within three (3) days.
- The Athletic Council (comprised of an administrator, the athletic director, and one non-coaching teacher) will then hear the appeal and make a decision within five (5) days. Decisions shall be rendered on the basis of majority or consensus vote of the committee. The decision of the Athletic Council is final.

Actions or acts of conduct considered detrimental to the school (may result in suspension or removal from the team).

Dual Sport Agreement

Student-Athlete: _____ Date: _____

Primary Sport: _____ Secondary Sport: _____

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By signing below, we agree to uphold the dual sports participation requirements and guidelines stated above:

(Student-Athlete) _____ (Parent)

(Primary Sport Coach) _____ (Secondary Sport Coach)

Ellsworth Community School Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement

In order to participate in athletics at Ellsworth Community School, both student-athletes and parents must acknowledge that they have received, read, and understand the rules and guidelines set forth in the Ellsworth Community School Athletic Handbook.

No student-athlete will be allowed to participate in practices and/or games until the signed handbook acknowledgement form is on file with the athletic department.

I have received a copy of the athletic handbook and I understand and support the rules and guidelines contained within it.

(Printed Student Name)

(Student-Athlete Signature)

(Date)

(Parent/guardian Signature)

(Date)