

## *Welcome*

On behalf of the Athletic Department of the Aberdeen Public Schools, we welcome you to the new sports season. We are very proud of our Golden Eagles and are excited to have your child as part of our programs.

Athletics is one of the most important elements in the overall education of our students. Sports provide an opportunity to extend the learning process onto the fields and courts thru interscholastic competition.

## *Why Athletics?*

The answer is simple: it assists the educational process in instilling and developing skills necessary for future success.

What skills? *Leadership-Communication-Goal Setting-Organization-Work Ethic-Self-Discipline-Perseverance-Cooperation-Loyalty-Honesty-Perspective-Relationships*

## *Athletic Department Philosophy*

Athletics are an extension of the classroom experience for the student-athlete. We are assisting in *Empowering All Students to Succeed in a Changing World*.

We are not a separate entity unto ourselves. We exist to enhance the experiences student-athletes receive first in the classroom.

## *Goal/Motto*

Utilitarian in nature – we want to provide the most students possible with the opportunity to experience athletic activity in an effort to enhance their overall educational experience.

We cannot be all things to all people. We will do what we expect our student-athletes to do – they best we can within the framework of our situation.

## *Objectives*

The objectives we are striving to meet within the Aberdeen Public Schools department of athletics are:

- (1) Develop the key skills for success as an adult.**
- (2) Develop the fundamental physical skills for athletic endeavors.**
- (3) Develop life long vocational and recreational interests.**

## *Parent's Creed*

As parents, you are an invaluable part of your child's educational and athletic development. Your attitudes and actions have the most impact upon the outcome of your child's learning in the athletic arena. Therefore, it is important that you see athletics for what it can do to help your child's development. The Parents Creed is:

*I will be the positive role model my child needs to become successful adult. In victory, I will be gracious, humble, and thankful. In defeat, I will be strong, honest, and accepting.*

## *The Key Commandments for Athletic Parents*

- (1) I will make sure my child knows I love them in the thrill of the victorious moment and the period of agony brought on by defeat.**
- (2) I will accept my child's strengths and weaknesses as they are - and focus on helping them to just do their best.**
- (3) I will let the coaches coach - my role is to support, encourage, and motivate progress on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.**
- (4) I will teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition - the fulfillment of just being part of it all - and the satisfaction of having done your very best.**

- (5) I will not re-live my athletic career through my children in any way.
- (6) I will not compete with the coach - together we will be a team to work toward the improvement of my child as a person, student, and athlete.
- (7) I will never compare and contrast the skills, courage, or attitude of my child with that of their teammates, or opponents, in a negative manner.
- (8) I will temper my reactions towards my child's tales of woe or heroism - we all tend to inflate reality to make it kinder to our personal standing.
- (9) I will take the time to know my child's coach in a way that allows me to understand their philosophy, ethics, knowledge, goals, aspirations, and responsibilities.
- (10) I will prioritize the agenda that drives my interest in the athletic program or any individual sport: the team agenda comes first- my personal agenda follows.
- (11) I will NOT allow the sport or game my child is part of to take on a life of its own.

## *Priorities*

In order to bring some perspective to the athletic department and its decision making system, the following are our priorities in the order of their importance:

Coaches - Athletes  
Programs  
People

When we make decisions about the direction the department or a sport is going to proceed, we do so based on the above criteria. The needs of the coaches and athletes come first because without them there is no athletic department. Programs are next, and then the other people who are involved.

When coaches make decisions about athletes and the various situations that come up as the seasons roll along, these are the priorities in the order of their importance by which decisions will be made:

*Faith and Family*  
*Education*

## Team

All other elements, jobs, friends, etc, will be prioritized by the individual athletes based upon their particular needs or wants.

## *Parents and Sportsmanship*

The following are just a few reminders of the important role parents play in modeling behaviors when involved in athletic programs:

- (1) You are a fan and spectator. – that’s your role – play it well.
- (2) You are not the coach - so don’t coach.
- (3) You are not an official - so don’t referee.
- (4) You are the host for all visiting teams - treat them with respect and dignity.
- (5) Cheer for our team - not against the opponent.

*Remember – you are a role model for your child and others who are part of the team and overall program – how do you want to be remembered?*

## *Common (vs) Personal Agendas*

Golden Eagle athletics offers many opportunities to grow and develop in ways that are beneficial to the group as a whole and as individuals. It is important to understand that for real success to be achieved and growth to take place, everyone needs to be on the same page - which means to have a common agenda.

Teams that work together to reach common goals are the most successful. Teams that are unsuccessful - even though they may be winning - are those that have personal agendas prioritized ahead of the team agenda.

Every athlete should have personal goals and aspirations. However, they must be secondary to the common agenda set for the team. If you are more worried about your points, statistics, place, or playing time instead of the team - we no longer have a team. What we have is a group of individuals - no one ever wins for long under these circumstances, no matter how good they are as individuals.

Common agendas lead to team success - personal agendas that are within the

framework of the team agenda will lead to personal success.

## *The Athletic Department's Chain of Command*

Board of Education  
Superintendent  
Principals  
Athletic Director  
Head Coaches  
Assistant Coaches

## *Athletic Opportunities*

The following are the athletic opportunities afforded the students of our District by season:

**Fall Season:** Boys Football Boys Cross Country Boys Golf Cheerleading  
Girls Cross Country Girls Tennis Girls Volleyball Cheerleading

**Winter Season:** Boys Basketball Boys Wrestling Cheerleading  
Girls Basketball Girls Gymnastics Cheerleading

**Spring Season:** Boys Track Boys Tennis  
Girls Track Girls Golf

The starting and ending dates for all of the above activities, 7-12, are found in the *Appendix*.

## *School Calendar*

The school calendar for the current year can be found in the *Appendix*.

## *Athletic Schedules*

These will be provided by the Golden Eagles Athletic Boosters

## *Athletic Questions and Concerns*

Questions, concerns, or complaints are best handled between the athletic director and the parents. All conversations will be held in the strictest confidence.

## *The Activities Code*

The parents and athletes need to know the District Activities Code and understand it's goals, procedures, and penalties. The Activities Code is found in the *Appendix*.

## *Pre-Participation Eligibility Requirements*

Before any athlete can participate in any practice session for any sport offered through the Aberdeen Public Schools, the following must be on file:

- (1) Current SDHSAA Physical Examination Form (*Appendix*)
- (2) Current SDHSAA Interim Pre-Participation Health History Form (*Appendix*)
- (3) Student Participation Permission Form (*Appendix*)
- (4) Emergency Medical Authorization Form (*Appendix*)
- (5) Proof of health/accident insurance (*Appendix*)

Coaches at each individual sport kick-off meeting will have the forms necessary and instruct parents on how to properly complete each form.

## *SDHSAA Eligibility Requirements*

Under the rules of the South Dakota High School Activities Association, athletes are **NOT ELIGIBLE IF:**

- (1) They have reached their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday**
- (2) Have attended more than 4 first and 4 second semesters in grades 9-12**
- (3) Have not passed 20 hours per week of high school work in the previous semester**
- (4) Have not enrolled in or attended a minimum of 20 hours of class per week**
- (5) Have graduated from a 4 year high school or an equivalent institution**
- (6) Have not enrolled by the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the current semester**
- (7) Have been absent for 10 consecutive school days - except illness/emergency**
- (8) Transferred without open enrolled completed or a parental resident change**
- (9) Do not have all a physical, history, or permission slip on file**
- (10) Have ever participated in an athletic contest under an assumed name**
- (11) Have ever violated their amateur status**
- (12) Have competed as a individual or member of another team during their regular high school season**

## ***Team Structures and Goals***

**In the great majority of our athletic offerings, we will have six team levels - each with it's own structure and goals. The following system, or segments of it, will be used throughout the athletic department:**

### ***Middle School Programs***

**(1) Seventh Grade - entry level programs. Emphasis on introducing interscholastic sports to as many students as possible and teaching them the sport, the basic skills needed by the sport, and to have fun. We want a healthy balance between the two key elements - participation and competition. We will have an A, B, and C team structure. Members of each team will be chosen by position. Teams will be selected by the senior high and middle school coaching staff. Our goal is to have every athlete participating at their level of development. We will balance the competition and participation factors at 50% each.**

**(2) Eight Grade - second level programs. Emphasis on further development of the sport, it's basic skills, and the fun element. A continued balance between the two key elements - participation and competition. We will have an A, B, and C team structure. Members of each team will be chosen by position. Teams will be selected by the senior high and middle school coaching staff. Our goals is to have every athlete participating at their level of development. We will balance the competition and participation factors at 50% peach.**

### ***Senior High Programs***

**(3) Ninth Grade - third level programs.** The emphasis is on honing and further development of the sport, it's skills, the fun element, and introduction of the more complex elements this level of competition requires. We have begin to shift the balance between participation and competition towards the competitive element. We will have an A and B team structure. However, if numbers allow for a C level, we will offer this opportunity. Our goal is to really offer the athletes a look at the rigors of an intense schedule and the demands of competition that accompany it. The balance between competition and participation shifts to a 60% competition-40% participation factor.

**(4) Sophomore - fourth level programs.** This is the first intensely demanding level within our system. The emphasis is on further development of the sport, it's basic and complex skills, and a continuation of the fun element. This is the first level in which the number of athletes will be limited. The balance between competition and participation shifts to a 70% competition and 30% participation formula.

**(5) Junior Varsity - fifth level programs.** This is the varsity preparatory level. We continue to develop the sport, it's basic and complex skills, and the fun element at the levels just below the requirements for varsity competition. The number of athletes at this level will be limited. The balance between competition and participation shifts to a 80% competition and 20% participation factor.

**(6) Varsity - sixth level programs.** This is where we put to use everything that has been developed and learned over the last five years. Basic skills continue to be extremely important. Complex sport skills are critical. The number of athletes at this level will be limited. The balance between competition and participation shifts to a 90% competition and 10% participation factor.

## ***Participation Selection***

Certain teams at certain levels has limitations on the number of participants. These limitations are the result of factors including time, facilities, equipment, staffing, budgets, and tradition. We do not like to limit participation of our team. In fact, it is the most difficult decision any coach has to make, but in some instances it has to be made.

You should know that many factors are considered before limitation decisions are made by the coaching staff. Perhaps the most important element may be the roles to be played on the team and how each part fits into the entire puzzle.

We will make the necessary decisions about limiting teams to certain numbers in as fair and a professional manner as possible. Questions concerning such decisions should be directed at the athletic office.

## ***Advancement of Middle School Athletes***

Athletes who are in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8th grade may be advanced to other levels of competition within our sports. However, our general rule of the thumb in this area is - *we want all our athletes to remain at their grade level.*

Parents who wish to request an advancement to another level of competition need to visit the athletic office for the necessary form. (*Appendix*) The final decision concerning the approval of a parental request is in the hands of the athletic director, head coach, and the building principal. Criteria for making the decision will revolve around the needs of the team at the next level(s) and the needs of the individual making the request.

## ***The Booster Club***

The athletic department encourages the participation of all parents in the Booster Club. This is a very important support system for the entire athletic program. The ideal booster club is one that is made up of parents, fans, and coaches. We need this group to really promote athletics and assist the department in providing our athletes with equipment, facilities, and opportunities they otherwise would not enjoy.

## ***Coach, Parent, and Athlete Relationships***

It is critical to the success of every sport and the entire athletic department that solid lines of communication exist between coaches, athletes, and parents. The needs of the three key elements in the sport, coaches, athletes, and parents, are best met when we all know what each other's role in the activity is and we play that role.

To allow our sports to be successful in any sense of the term, there needs to be good communication between coaches, athletes, and parents. To allow this to happen it is very important to understand what should and should not be topics of discussion between coaches, athletes, and parents.

We believe that there are three topics that are off limits in discussions between coaches, athletes, and parents:

- (1) Playing time
- (2) Coaching strategy
- (3) Other athletes

The reason we fell this way is simple - playing time and coaching strategy decisions are the responsibility of the coaching staff. Also, discussion of other athletes with anyone outside of the immediate coaching staff is unprofessional.

*Also, just because another parent is talking to a coach, it does not mean their child is going to receive preferential treatment in that sport. Please, don't jump to any conclusions about a public or private meeting between a coach and parents.*

If you need to talk to someone about any situation that concerns you about a coach or the team, come and discuss it with the athletic director. Nothing is off limits with the athletic director and all *conversations are confidential.*

## *Mandatory Meetings*

The athletic department has three mandatory meetings each year - these will be at the start of our fall, winter, and spring seasons. The reason for a mandatory meeting is to start the season off on the right foot, convey our philosophy, goals, rules, regulations, and make every athlete and parent aware of the possible dangers associated with athletic activities.

## *Spirit of the Eagle Nights*

At the end of each season - fall, winter, and spring - the department will host the parents and athletes in and end of the sport awards night. At these events, we will be presenting four key awards for each sport: Most Valuable, Most Improved, Rookie of the Year, and Spirit of the Eagle.

This does not prevent each sport for having our traditional get-together right after their season ends to present letters or other similar types of awards within the team structure.

The *Spirit of the Eagle* schedule is in the *Appendix*.

## *Eagle Extrodinaire*

The athletic department sponsors weekly and monthly awards for those athletes who have made a special impact upon the success of their team. The weekly award for each team is a special t-shirt sponsored by Rod Kurtz and the Pepsi-Cola Company.

## *Awarding of Letters*

Each sport will have a specific system for awarding letters. The head coach will determine the criteria for that sport. The lettering system will be explained to the athletes and parents at the first meeting of the season.

## *Practice Philosophy*

Our philosophy for practice is very simple - every athlete will be at every practice unless excused by the head coach for that activity. Each head coach will determine the consequences for non-excused absences.

*In order for an athlete to practice, or compete, on any given day, they must be in school for every class period assigned* - exceptions to this rule would be medical appointments, death or illness in the family, or other special circumstances beyond the control of the athlete.

*Athletes should never be allowed to stay home and rest before or after any event - no matter how important it may seem.*

## *Gifts or Awards*

Under the rules of eligibility for interscholastic competition set forth by the South

Dakota High School Activities Association, no athlete can accept any gift or award that has a value of more than \$75.

## *Pride Parents*

Each sport will have parents that are selected to assist the team with special activities and situations. They will also be that teams spokespersons in the Booster Club.

Parents are asked to contact the head coach in each sport for further information on the Pride Parents.

This is an excellent opportunity to get involved in making the athletes experience more enjoyable and rewarding.

## *Weight Room*

The weight room is one of the most important facilities in our entire athletic department. It is in the weight room that our athletes get bigger, stronger, and faster. Parents need to encourage the use of this facility.

## *Care or Equipment*

Every athlete will be given equipment and/or uniforms that are provided by the District. Athletes are responsible for these items. Lost or damaged items will result in a fine being levied upon the athlete.

## *Transportation*

Hub City Transit contracts for all athletic transportation for the District. The athletic department requests and assigns the various vehicles available depending upon the needs of each team

*The athletic department policy is that all athletes ride with their team to and from all activities.* The only exceptions to this will be cases where family situations require the athlete to ride to or from an event. We would like to keep such happenings to a bare

minimum. In such cases, athletes need to secure a Travel Release Form from the coach, have the parents complete the form, and return it to the coach BEFORE leaving for the event. (*Appendix*)

Athletes who will be traveling to practice or competition sites within the community will be able to ride special or assigned school buses. The cost of this is \$10 per athlete per sport. Athletes using inter-city transportation will, in most cases, be returned to their school after the completion of practice.

### *Sunday Participation*

No contest under the auspices of the South Dakota High School Activities Association may be staged on Sunday. The athletic department will not schedule or allow any practices or open gyms.

### *Wednesday Evening Activities*

All public school sponsored practices will end by 6:00 PM on Wednesday evenings.

### *Inclement Weather Situations*

When school is dismissed early due to inclement weather, no practice or open gym will be conducted. All students will go home. When the school start time is delayed due to inclement weather, no AM practices or open gyms will be held. When school is canceled due to inclement weather, no practice or open gym will be held.

If school is dismissed for heat reasons – high school teams will practice – but will follow an abbreviated schedule – middle school teams will NOT practice.

### *Overnight Travel and Meals*

The District will pay for lodging athletic teams on overnight excursions. The District will NOT pay for meals on any athletic trips - EXCEPT when reimbursed by the SDHSAA for state event expenditures.

**Student-athletes are to remain with their team during overnight excursions. We want our coaches to know where everyone is all the time. Parents please remember they are on a trip with their team – this is time for their athletic family.**

**Frankly, allow the student-athletes this time to bond as a team and individuals. Parents who are too close on out of town trips can disrupt the normal functioning of the team process.**

## ***Cancellation of Events***

**In the event any scheduled athletic event has to be canceled or postponed the athletic office will inform the news media in the community as soon as possible. Listen to the radio stations or call the athletic office at 626-7188.**

## ***Hazing***

**It is the policy of the District that hazing will not be permitted in any way, shape, or form. Athletes who violate this District guideline will be punished accordingly. Parents are encouraged to report any incidents of this type to the athletic office.**

## ***Summer Participation Philosophy***

**The athletic department believes the summer participation situation needs to be kept in proper perspective. Athletic development during the summer months needs to focus on the development of individual skills and strength. Team skills are secondary in nature. Student-athletes need to organize their summer around the following priorities:**

- (1) Weight Room**
- (2) Individual Skill Development**
- (3) Open Gym/Captains Runs/3 on 3**
- (4) Individual Camps**

## **(5) Team Skill Development**

**We think the most important summer activity for all our athletes is the weight room. After that, they need to work on their individual skills so that they can perform the tasks necessary to be the best they can more efficiently. The guidelines that will drive our summer team programs will be the following for each activity:**

- (1) schedule one in-school camp**
- (2) schedule one out-of-town camp**
- (3) schedule open gym situations**

**We will coordinate our activities so that the in and out of town activities do not conflict with each other. We will set the summer schedules for each activity and coordinate the in and out of town camps. When we have these camps, we do not want conflicts with any other athletic events planned by any other entity.**

**Remember – neither the coaches or the parents can make the student-athlete the best they can be – that’s a personal responsibility. You get better by the following process:**

- (1) get bigger, stronger, and faster (weight room)**
- (2) develop individual skills (self-motivated activities)**
- (3) learn new skills and correct your mistakes (open gym)**
- (4) be motivated to get better (individual camps)**
- (5) put your new and developed skills to work (team camps)**

