

Sidney Central School District



Athletic
Handbook

Dear Student Athletes and their Parent/Guardians:

Welcome to Sidney Interscholastic Athletics!

The National Federation of High School Associations refers to co-curricular activities as the “other half of education”. Interscholastic athletics is one of the most visible and important of the co-curricular activities a school offers.

Participation in athletics can and should be a significant contributor to the physical, psychological, and emotional development of our young people. It is expected that the district will provide our student athletes with a well-organized, well-administered program in order that they are able to grow, mature and develop while engaging in wholesome, competitive athletic programs. A student should be able to achieve individually while working as part of and for the good of the team.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege. Therefore, while the District has the responsibility to provide a program of excellence; our student-athletes have the responsibility to represent themselves, their families, school, and community in a manner reflective of the standards of the community and the expectations of the Board of Education, the administration, and the coaching staff.

This Handbook is designed to spell out the expectations of all members of our Athletic Community. The Sidney Central School District athletic program is governed by the rules and regulations of the New York State Department of Education, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), Section IV, and the Mid-State Athletic Conference. This Handbook is a reflection of the rules of these organizations, as well as the Sidney philosophy of athletic competition.

Please review the Handbook, including the Code of Conduct and Training Rules, very carefully. All student-athletes will be held under the code of conduct during their entire season and off-season. Please keep the Handbook as a reference for future use. If you have any questions or comments on this Handbook or on any aspect of our athletic program, please free to call the Athletic Coordinator at 607-561-7712.

Principles of the Interscholastic Athletic Program

It is our belief that interscholastic athletics provide students with a model of life itself; opportunities exist for lessons in responsibility, fair play, cooperation, concerns for others, leadership, respect for authority, good citizenship, loyalty, continuous learning experiences, health and wellness, and acceptance of the differences among individuals.

While we believe that the desire to win is admirable, and that winning is an integral part of development of each student, winning is not itself the sole measure of success. Of considerably greater importance is the development of each person who participates in interscholastic athletics. The opportunities for individuals to reach their potential and experience the lessons previously mentioned should be the focal point of our athletic program. Sacrificing individual goals for team goals is indeed paramount to this concept. Thus, the athletic program should be focused on the welfare of the student and the potential for growth as a result of participation on a team.

Interscholastic Athletics in Sidney Central School District

- Is conducted in accordance with the letter and spirit of the rules and regulations of the national, state and league athletic associations.
- Is supplemental to rather than a substitute for physical education programs.
- Is conducted by persons with appropriate training through either physical education or coaching certification programs.
- Is conducted so that physical welfare and safety of participants is protected and fostered.
- Is regarded as an integral part of the total educational program and conducted so that it is worthy of such regard.
- Is subject to the same administrative supervision as the total educational program and its' code of conduct.

Sportsmanship in Athletics in Sidney Central School District

- Participants should learn and understand the rules of their sport. Play hard; play to win, but play fairly within the rules.
- Participants and spectators should always maintain self-control. Do not allow your temper to distract you from the fundamentals of good sportsmanship.
- Participants should respect their opponent. Never taunt. Congratulate him/her at games end. Acknowledge good play.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of officials. Never question the decision of an official.

Coaches/Supervisors Responsibilities

- Enforce the District Code of Conduct for Athletes and each sport specific code of conduct: Report problems to supervisors and write written reports as soon as possible if applicable.
- Responsible for athletes from departure point of trip until trip is completed and are sure all athletes have transportation to their home.
- Ensure all parents have signed the "Release of Liability" form if applicable.
- Responsible for making proper eating arrangements for athletes if applicable.

- Ensure transportation provided by The Sidney Central School District, unless approved by the Director of Athletics, is utilized.
- Have access to all emergency information. **This information may be carried in the team's med kit in hard copy form or may be accessed on the coach's cell phone.**
- Notify parents if a student-athlete has been injured and ensure an accident form is filled out as soon as possible.
- Will notify proper authorities in cases of serious injury to athletes.

Each coach and supervisor must realize the important role they play in the success of the Code of Conduct. This success is directly related to the coach's maturity, sense of responsibility, diligence in supervision, and effectiveness in enforcement.

Mid-State Athletic Conference Expectations of Student-Athletes, Coaches, Parents and Spectators

The Sidney Central School District belongs to the Mid-State Athletic Conference. The Mid-State Athletic Conference is a member of Section IV of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). These organizations have a set of expectations for all stake-holders of interscholastic athletics.

Expectations of Student-Athletes

- Be respectful of teammates and opponents at all times.
- Demonstrate class and good character in victory and defeat.
- Play within the rules and accept the outcomes.
- Conduct yourselves with honesty, integrity, poise and composure at all times.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship and act as a positive role model at all times.
- Student-athletes who are removed from an athletic contest for unsporting reasons are subject to a one game suspension by Section IV for a first offense and additional suspensions for a second offense. The Sidney Central School District retains the option of suspending the student-athlete for additional games if it feels it is warranted.

Expectations of Coaches

- Establish, promote, model and maintain standards of good sportsmanship with fellow coaches, student-athletes, parents and spectators.
- Respect the decisions of game officials and act professionally and appropriately in interactions with the officials.
- Maintain your composure at all times.
- Refrain from embarrassing your players.
- Treat mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- Acknowledge, in a positive way, the efforts of your opponents.

Expectations of Parents

- Respect game officials, players, coaches and spectators.
- Recognize outstanding performances by members of either home or visiting teams.
- Be exemplary role models by demonstrating good sportsmanship and showing support for individuals and teams.
- Maintain composure at all times.

Expectations of Spectators

- Be respectful of game officials, players, coaches, opposing fans and facilities.
- Cheer in a positive way during the introduction of players, coaches and officials.
- Cheer in a positive way for your team and refrain from negative cheering/chants that are directed towards opponents.
- Demonstrate concern for any injured players.
- Be reminded that you represent not only your school but your community and family as well.
- Conduct yourselves in an appropriate and civil manner at all times.

Student Eligibility for Interscholastic Athletics

According to NYSPHAA regulations, a student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition provided he/she is a bona fide student in good standing of the represented school, taking four subjects including physical education. A student shall be eligible for only four years in one sport, in consecutive years, upon entering the ninth grade, unless approved through the athletic placement process (APP).

Minimum and maximum requirements for individual and team practices are set forth in the NYSPHAA handbook. There are additional regulations for attendance, which pertain to Sidney athletics. These regulations can be found in the section entitled "Attendance" found later in this booklet.

A student who reaches the age of 19 before July 1 may not participate in interscholastic athletics. For modified programs, the student is eligible upon entering 7th grade.

Individuals with questions concerning athletic eligibility should contact the Athletic Coordinator.

Transportation

Students will be transported in a school district vehicle to and from away contests. Parents may request approval from the Athletic Coordinator to transport their children in a special circumstance. The Athletic Coordinator will make a final decision on this request.

Sports Physicals

Sports physicals are provided by the school district at no cost to our students-athletes. A student may choose to have a sports physical through a private physician, however, school district forms must be completed by the physician and all costs incurred are the responsibility of the student-athlete. A sport physical is in effect for one school year. A current Health History Update form must be completed by the parent/guardian for any physical over 30 days old. A sports physical is required before participation in an interscholastic school sport is permitted.

Important: A sports physical is not necessarily the same as a routine physical examination. If a student is examined by a private physician for participation in sports, it is essential that a school sports physical form be completed by the physician.

Injuries and Insurance

A student athlete should report any injuries, immediately, no matter how slight, to his/her coach or parent. Medical expenses resulting from any injury must first be submitted to the athlete's parent/guardians own insurance carrier. If there is any remaining balance it can be submitted to the school's accident insurance carrier who will determine what, if any, further payment or reimbursement will be made. If a coach is not available, the injury should be reported to the school nurse, the athletic trainer, or an administrator, or supervisor as soon as possible after the injury has occurred. Coaches will complete a student accident report and submit it to the school nurse.

Risk Factor in Sports

Participation in interscholastic sports is a very rewarding experience. However, as with any sport competition, there is a certain risk of injury. Each sport has its own activities which can lead to injury, and the danger involved can vary from sport to sport. The nature of athletic injury can run from minor injuries, such as bruises and scrapes, to more serious injuries, such as fractures, dislocations, and concussions.

The Sidney Central School District is committed to providing as safe an environment for participation as possible. Our fields, gymnasiums and equipment are kept in the best possible condition. Parents/guardians should notify the coach of illness or injury and make the Athletic Coordinator aware if they feel any equipment is unsafe.

The district employs a certified athletic trainer to provide quality care for our student-athletes. Please see the school nurse for days/hours that the athletic trainer is scheduled to be in the district.

Concussions

In accordance with the Concussion Management and Awareness Act and Board Policy 7522, the following information is being provided to parents in an effort to increase the overall awareness of concussions. A definition of a concussion, the signs and symptoms, how concussions occur, practices regarding prevention and the guidelines for the return to school and school activities for a student who has suffered a concussion, even if the injury occurred outside of school are listed below.

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). A concussion occurs when normal brain functioning is disrupted by a blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. 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 academics as well as their athletic pursuits.

Symptoms of concussion usually fall into four categories:

Thinking/Remembering

Physical

Emotional/Mood

Sleep

- **Thinking/Remembering**
 - Difficulty thinking clearly
 - Feeling slowed down
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Difficulty remembering new information
- **Physical**
 - Headache, fuzzy or blurred vision
 - Nausea or vomiting, especially early on.
 - Dizziness
 - Sensitivity to noise or light
 - Balance Problems
 - Feeling tired, having no energy
- **Emotional/Mood**
 - Irritability
 - Sadness
 - More emotional
 - Nervous or anxious
- **Sleep**
 - Sleeping more or less than usual
 - Trouble falling asleep

Concussions occur when the head or body receives a blow or is jolted which causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. The Sidney Central School District is doing the following to help prevent concussions and to avoid re-injury through over-exertion or return to activities before the student is fully recovered.

- All Sidney Central School District Coaches receive training in recognizing the symptoms of concussions or MTBIs and monitoring and seeking proper medical treatment for students who suffer from a concussion or MTBI.
- The Sidney Central School District has chosen to use validated Neurocognitive computerized testing as a concussion assessment tool to obtain baseline and post-concussion performance data. This computerized baseline testing will be used on students participating in selected sports designated “contact sports” by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association. Normative data will be used on students participating in non-contact sports. This testing is not a replacement for a medical evaluation to diagnose and treat a concussion; it is merely a tool for the physician to gather as much information in order to as accurately as possible diagnose the injury.
- If an athlete is removed from a contest following any signs or symptoms of concussion the student in question will not return to play in the current game. He/she will be required to have the injury medically evaluated.
- Athletes will complete the following stepwise process prior to return to play following a concussion:
 - Neuropsychological testing (considered a cornerstone of proper post-injury assessment)
 - Steps to return to play
 1. No activity and rest until asymptomatic
 2. Light aerobic exercise
 3. Sport-specific training
 4. Noncontact drills
 5. Full contact drills
 6. Full Game play

Note- Once a student begins the return to play steps, the student in question must be symptom free for all of the steps before the student will be granted permission to return to play. If the student develops **ANY** of the symptoms during the return to play protocol, the student will return to the previous step and then resume the return to play protocol.

For example, if a student was doing some sport-specific training drills (step 3) and during these drills got a headache, this student would rest until asymptomatic (at least 24 hours) and return the last step the student was at where he/she was asymptomatic. In this case it would be step 2.

In accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, the Sidney Central School District's Chief Medical Advisor will give final clearance on a return to activity (physical education classes, recess or interscholastic athletics).

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT AND TRAINING RULES

General Statement on Participation:

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Sidney is a privilege. This participation should elicit great pride among all school and community members. Part of the responsibility that goes with the participation in school sports is the need to maintain appropriate standards of behavior.

Therefore, the following are standards of behavior which must be maintained in order to remain eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics at Sidney. The signatures of both the Student-athlete and a parent/guardian indicate that each is aware of the expectations. Before a Student-athlete is permitted to participate on an athletic team, both the student athlete and the parent/guardian must sign an athletic code of conduct form and return it to either a coach or the athletic director. (This form can be found at the back of this handbook, or may be obtained from a coach or athletic director.)

Attendance

Absence

Absence from school is not acceptable, although it is recognized that occasionally student-athletes will be absent. It is expected that all student-athletes should only be absent from school for excused reasons.

Per Board Policy 7110 excused and unexcused absences will be determined by the following procedure:

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The school district makes a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Excused absences will not count against students' ability to earn course credit. Written excuses must be provided for each excused absence and the work missed from the absence must be made up in a timely manner.

Excused absences will include but not be limited to:

Student illness up to five (5) consecutive school days (with a parent/guardian's note);

Student illness for more than five (5) consecutive school days (with a doctor's note);

Necessary medical appointments (with parent/guardian's note);

Mandatory court appearances or necessary legal appointments;

Religious observances from the New York State recognized days of religious observance list (with a parent/guardian's note);

Death of a family member (with a parent/guardian's note);

Meetings requested by the principal or assistant principal;

Alternative educational programs;

Special education testing and Committee for Special Education meetings;

Field trips, conferences and workshops;

Band and chorus lessons;

College visits when accompanied by parent/guardian (with a parent/guardian's note);

Drivers test;

Other absences approved by the principal or designee.

Students must submit a signed note from their parent/guardian to return from the absence for that absence to be counted as excused. Failure to submit a parent/guardian's note in a timely manner will result in an absence being classified "unexcused" even though the student was out for an excused reason.

Unexcused absence will include but not be limited to:

Shopping trips;

Hair appointments;

Oversleeping;

Delays at open lunch;

Skipping class;

No explanation.

Upon reaching five (5) unexcused absences for any class period during the fall or spring season or eight (8) absences for any class period during the winter season, the athlete will have his/her eligibility to participate reviewed by the Athletic Director and High School Principal.

Arriving Late To School

Student-athletes must be in school by 8:15 am to be eligible to participate in that day's practice or contest. Any tardy after 8:15 am must be an excused tardy in order to participate in any athletic practice or contest.

Student-Athlete Behavior

A student-athlete represents the school community, and the privilege of being a member of a school team must be earned and maintained. Therefore, the following rules have been established so that student-athletes understand the value of participation in interscholastic athletics and as a reminder that inappropriate behavior is punishable by suspension or removal from a team at the discretion of the Principal and Athletic Coordinator.

Students serving any penalty of suspension from class or school (ISS/OSS) for a school day incident shall be ineligible to participate in the interscholastic athletic program during the period of suspension. The student may not practice or sit on the bench. They may not attend home school events other than academic classes. If the suspension occurs on a Friday, the student-athlete will not be eligible to participate in practice or contests that weekend.

Academic Eligibility

Generally speaking, participation in Interscholastic Athletics has a positive effect on academic performance. It is the belief of the Sidney Central School District that parents, coaches, teachers, and students should form a partnership in the development of the whole child. Therefore, all parties will work together to ensure the athletic and academic success of the student-athlete.

High School and Junior High Academic Eligibility Policy

- Student academic performance will be evaluated on weekly basis (Monday) to determine their eligibility for the current week.
 - A student who is participating in the athletic program and who is failing any class will be assigned to attend the Sidney Central School District Intervention Classes.
 - Students failing **2 or more classes** are ineligible for competition until the next week's grade report is reviewed and will be assigned to attend the Sidney Central School District Intervention Classes.
 - Note: all student-athletes that are determined to be ineligible for academic reasons can appeal the decision to the Athletic Coordinator and High School Principal. The administrator will make the final decision to the student's eligibility.

Physical Education

Student-athletes are required to participate in regularly scheduled physical education class. Failure to do so will result in a suspension from a game or practice for that day.

Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Substance Abuse Policy

Students are prohibited from the use, possession, or sale of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs during school and out-of-school.

The giving or selling of tobacco to another student or minor is prohibited. Such tobacco includes smoking, chewing, or any form of ingestion.

- Students found guilty of using, possessing, and giving or selling tobacco will be suspended from the team for 25% of that sports season for a first offense.
- The second violation results in suspension for the remainder of the current or next season the student participates in.
- The third violation results in suspension from all participation for one (1) calendar year.
- All violations during the time of high school eligibility are considered cumulative—they do not start over each year.
- Any subsequent tobacco violations will result in a suspension from athletic participation for one (1) calendar year.

If students are found in possession, under the influence or participating in the sale/transfer of alcohol or other drugs on school grounds, at school events, viewed through social media or photos, the appropriate discipline action as stated in the Student Handbook will be taken. In addition, student athletes will be disciplined in accordance with the rules and regulations adopted by the Sidney Central School District as written below.

- For the first violation of the drug and alcohol rule, students are suspended from the team for the rest of the season. The student may apply for reinstatement during the current season or future seasons based, in part, on an evaluation by the Delaware County Drug and Alcohol Abuse Service. This service is located at 72 Main St. Delhi, NY 13753. They may be reached by phone at (607) 746-8300.
- For a student's second violation of the drug and alcohol rule, they are suspended from athletic participation for one (1) calendar year.
- For a third violation, students are suspended from athletic participation for the remainder of high school eligibility. Students may not apply for reinstatement.

Violations of the alcohol and other drug rules are cumulative from 7th grade through 12th grade (violations occurring during middle school transfer to high school).

Dignity for All Students' Act

Intent: The Dignity for All Students Act amends Education Law to put in place procedures for the creation of school environments free from discrimination and harassment. This law is effective July 1, 2012.

Definition:

- Harassment/Hazing- The creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of reasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits or mental, emotional or physical well-being.

Prohibitions: On school property and at school functions, the Dignity for All Students Act prohibits:

- Student harassment by school employees or students on school property or at a school function. This prohibition extends to cyber-bullying: this can be through verbal or written threats through an internet service such as e-mail, chat room, discussion group, instant messaging, or social networking sites on or off school property.
- Student discrimination by school employees or students which is based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment:

- Any person having reasonable cause to suspect that a student has been subjected to discrimination or harassment, who acts reasonably and in good faith in reporting such information or initiates informal or formal proceedings, has immunity from any civil liability that may arise. No school district or employee may take, request, or cause retaliatory action against a person, who, acting reasonably and in good faith makes a report or initiates informal or formal proceedings.

Individual Team Standards

Often a coach will develop standards for a specific team. These standards may come in the form of responsibilities, requirements, expectations, and penalties for violations. They will reflect the standards of this handbook and the coach's expectations for his/her team.

Once approved by the Athletic Coordinator, these standards will act as an extension of the district Athletic Code of Conduct. Student-athletes and their parents/guardians should become familiar with the standards and expectations for a specific team.