

## **Elmira Heights Central School District Student-Athlete Handbook**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the athletic department of the Elmira Heights Central School District is to help promote a healthy lifestyle, academic achievement, sportsmanship, responsibility for self, respect for others, teamwork, winning or losing with dignity, and commitment.

### **Preamble**

It is a privilege to represent our school in athletics. Standards of excellence are required of students in the areas of self-control and conduct. Participants have the responsibility and accountability to be exemplary citizens on and off the playing field. If our school is to excel in interscholastic competition, we must first discipline our conduct and behavior as individuals, then as a team, and then as a school.

These rules of eligibility have been established for the benefit of our varsity, junior varsity, and modified sports squads. When referring to student-athlete, it also includes cheerleaders. In order that appropriate regulations are followed, students classified by the Committee on Special Education will be referred to the Committee immediately.

### **STUDENT/ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES**

As models for all of our students, it is your responsibility to work hard and insure that your actions reflect the standards set up by the athletic department and the Elmira Heights Board of Education. Younger students will look up to you and it is your responsibility to set a good example for them. It is important that you recognize that through dedication, hard work, and discipline you will be rewarded with the development of fond memories and personal achievements. It is expected that student-athletes in the Elmira Heights Central School District will:

1. Demonstrate self-control and respect for others at all times, be they officials, spectators or other athletes.
2. Remember that participation in athletics is a privilege that is not to be abused by unsportsmanlike conduct.
3. Deal with opponents with respect.
4. Respect the integrity and judgments of the officials.
5. Understand and abide by the rules and regulations of the game.
6. Accept victory with grace and defeat with dignity.
7. Remember that the use, abuse and resulting negative influence of drugs, including alcohol, tobacco, and performance-enhancing supplements are detrimental to the game and its participants.
8. Remember your proper or improper behavior while in uniform or in our community reflects upon yourself, your family, your school, and your community.
9. Respect your teammates.

### **I. PRACTICE SESSIONS AND GAMES**

Each team member is expected to be present at all practice sessions and games unless legally excused from school or personally excused by the coach. Missing practice or games for illegal reasons or continued tardiness may result in disciplinary action that includes a warning, suspension, or dismissal from the team.

## **II. ATTENDANCE**

An athlete must be in school the day of the contest and the day before going to any special tournament or out-of-state contest.

1. If an athlete is absent the last school day of the week and the competition is on the non-school day, the athlete must bring to the coach a signed statement from the parent or guardian that permission is given to participate.
2. If an athlete is illegally absent, truant, **suspended in or out of school**, or excused during the school day due to illness, he/she may not participate in a sport activity that day – whether it is practice or a game.
3. Each athlete must make every effort to be in school the day following athletic events. If a pattern of absences develop following athletic events, the coach will take appropriate disciplinary action. That action may range from a warning to suspension from participation for a period of time.
4. An athlete is expected to report for school on time each day. Constant tardiness or absences to school could result in warning, suspension, or dismissal from the team.
5. If a player becomes ill during the day and cannot practice, it is his/her responsibility to leave a message with the attendance clerk, Athletic Director, or a coach.
6. A student-athlete returning from an extended absence may require a period of reconditioning before participation in practices or games.
7. All players will sit with their team during the entire athletic event.
8. A student that is tardy to school 10 minutes or more, without a legal excuse, will not participate in that night's activity, whether it is a practice or a game.
9. If a student attends a practice session held in the morning before school begins, and the student does not attend school that day, they will be ineligible for the following day's activity, whether that is a practice or a game.
10. If a student has accumulated 20 period absences, excused or unexcused, for any 1 credit course, and 10 period absences for any ½ credit course, he/she will be unable to attend or be a participant in any extracurricular activities for the remainder of the course. This includes participating on athletic teams.

## **III. GENERAL STUDENT-ATHLETE CONDUCT**

Good community citizenship is required of all athletes. Students are expected to follow all laws, school and government regulations, and are expected to refrain from interfering with the individual and property rights of others. The disciplinary consequences administered by a coach or Athletic Director will be progressive depending on the seriousness of the offense.

1. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited, stealing or in possession of stolen items, vandalism, physical altercations, intimidation, harassment, sexual misconduct or exposure, and trespassing.
  - a. The above-mentioned infractions can result in, but not limited to a warning, suspension, to dismissal from the team.
  - b. The Interscholastic Discipline Referral Form may be used to refer students that continually violate the rules set forth by the coach or Athletic Handbook to the Athletic Director.
  - c. In addition to the rules in this handbook, each coach may have his/her own set of rules and policies.

2. Any athlete arrested or receiving an appearance ticket by police may be suspended from their team until such time the Athletic Director or Principal can investigate the infraction and a decision can be made on participation. If dismissed from the squad, the athlete will be ineligible to participate in athletics for a period of (6) six school weeks.
3. Any athlete who is insubordinate or disrespectful during the school day, any practice session, or game may be subject to disciplinary action by the team coach. That action may range from a warning to suspension to dismissal from the team. **Your attitude and actions in school can affect your practice and playing time.**

#### **SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS**

“This game is being played to promote good sportsmanship and fair play. We should recognize the purpose of athletics is to promote physical, mental, social and emotional well being of individual players and their fans and that this is a game between high school students, not professionals.

Section IV rules allow no alcoholic beverages, noisemakers, obscene language, taunting, objectionable cheers or throwing of objects. Anyone not abiding by the rules set forth by the Section may be subject to immediate ejection from the premises.

Your help in following the rules will be greatly appreciated. If you do your part as a spectator, we are sure that you and the players will have a worthwhile experience.”

#### **IT IS THE EXPECTATION OF THE ELMIRA HEIGHTS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT ALL SPECATORS FOLLOW GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE FAN BEHAVIOR**

##### **Expectations for Parents and Spectators**

- Realize that athletics are a part of the educational experience and that the benefits go beyond the final score of the contest.
- Realize that a ticket is a privilege to observe a contest and support the activities of our youth. It is not a license to verbally assault others.
- Respect decisions made by the contest officials.
- Be an exemplary role model by supporting teams in a positive manner.
- Respect fans, coaches, officials, administrators, and participants.
- BE A FAN...NOT A FANATIC!!

#### **VI. USE OR POSSESSION OF TOBACCO, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, OR ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES**

Possession or use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or illegal substances on school property is strictly forbidden and will be dealt with in concurrence with the District’s Policy on Alcohol, Tobacco Products and Other Substance Use/Abuse. A student-athlete who is involved off campus with tobacco, drugs or alcohol will be subject to the following consequences. Students are beholden to these consequences only during their athletic season. Seasons are defined by the Interscholastic Athletic Conference (IAC). Sports seasons start on specific dates and then finish at the end of all mandated competitions.

1. Any athlete who is caught in possession or using tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, snuff, cigarettes will be suspended for (6) weeks for fall and spring sports and (8) weeks for winter sports for each offense..
2. Any athlete who remains present at a location where minors are illegally consuming drugs and/or alcoholic beverages will be suspended for (3) weeks for the first offense for fall and spring sports and (4) weeks for first offense for winter sports. All athletes will serve twelve weeks for the second offense. Remaining present would be determined by the individual becoming aware or **reasonably should have been aware** that alcohol or drugs were being consumed and that he/she failed to leave the location immediately.
3. Any athlete in possession of, using, or distributing any controlled substance (drugs, alcoholic beverages) will be ineligible to participate for a period of six (6) weeks in the case of the first incident for fall and spring sports and (8) weeks for winter sports. Athletes will be ineligible for twelve (12) weeks following the second incident for all sports seasons. In the event of a third occurrence, a student will be dismissed from all athletic activities for one year. The student may be able to participate again the next year pending a Superintendent's hearing. The period of ineligibility to participate in another sporting activity will begin from the date of the dismissal. Violations and all subsequent penalties will carry over from season to season, sport to sport, and year to year.
4. The use of steroids is specifically prohibited. Any student using steroids is subject to the same penalties as in the use of any other controlled/illegal substances. The Athletic Director or Principal may request from parents that their son/daughter be tested for controlled/illegal substance if there is reasonable suspicion.

## **V. DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT**

The Elmira Heights Central School District is in full support and compliance with the Dignity for All Students Act.

- 1 Harassment: The Dignity Act (Education Law §11[7]) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. Such conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse, includes, but is not limited to conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived.
- 2 Bullying: Bullying has been described by the USDE as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can occur before and after school hours, in a school building or places like a playground or bus, while a child is traveling to or from school or on the Internet. Children who are bullied and those who bully others could have serious, lasting problems.

- 3 Hazing: The Penal Law defines hazing as a person intentionally or recklessly engaging in conduct during the course of another person's initiation into or affiliation with any organization, which creates a substantial risk of physical injury to such other person or a third person and thereby causes such injury.
- 4 Discrimination: Discrimination is not specifically defined in the Dignity Act. However, for reference purposes, it should be noted that Education Law §§3201 and 3201-a prohibit discrimination in the form of denial of admission into or exclusion from any public school on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, or and gender.

\*\*\*It is understood that each student-athlete has a duty to report any acts of the above activities that are observed or known to a coach or administrator. Any participation in the above activities or failure to report any form of the above activities will result in a disciplinary review and possible disciplinary actions.

#### **VI. PRACTICE ELIGIBILITY BEFORE THE START OF THE SEASON**

Each participant must have a valid physical exam, proof of which must be submitted to the nurse, before starting the first practice. Prospective athletes will be required to return a completed Annual Pre-Participation Health History Form prior to each sport season and the Interim Health History Update. Physicals completed by a private physician must still be reviewed and approved by the school physician before an athlete will be allowed to participate. Athletes will not be permitted to practice until all of the appropriate steps have been completed.

#### **VII. FINISHING A SEASON IN GOOD STANDING**

A student athlete must finish an entire season in good standing. If they are dismissed from a team; or quit a team after the first three weeks of the season, they must schedule a meeting with the Athletic Committee comprised of the following people in order to participate in another sports season.

1. Athletic Director;
2. Principal;
3. Coach of the team they were dismissed from or quit;
4. Coach of the new team they wish to participate with the next sports season;
5. Neutral Faculty member not connected with the Athletic Program.

The Athletic Committee shall be charged to hear the request and determine future eligibility. The student athlete and their family must request, in writing to the Athletic Director, a meeting with the Athletic Committee. The student athlete will present their case for future participation to the Athletic Committee and the Athletic Committee shall determine if eligibility for participation is to be restored. As soon as a decision is rendered, the Athletic Director will inform the student athlete and their family.

This procedure does not pertain to students dismissed from teams due to the academic eligibility policy. That has its own procedure.

#### **Appeal Process:**

Any appeal to the Athletic Committee decision must be made within 24 hours, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools. Any further appeals would be done first to the Elmira Heights CSD Board of Education, and then to the New York State Commissioner of

Education. Until the time that the Athletic Committee's decision is overturned at one of the appeal levels, the student will remain ineligible for participation.

### **VIII. INJURY DURING THE SEASON**

- 1 An athlete must report any apparent injury immediately to your coach! **If you are in doubt, still report it to the coach.**
- 2 When a student is injured and goes to a physician or the emergency room, he/she must bring a written release from the doctor to the school nurse and coach before returning to practice or a game.

### **IX. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

This policy is intended to supplement, not supplant the school discipline policy and the rules concerning the conduct of student athletes, cheerleaders, and the cast and crew of the school play.

This policy does not replace any of the requirements and regulations of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association requirements which a student must meet in order to compete in interscholastic athletics.

This policy shall not cover school-sponsored dances, clubs, organizations, or attendance as a spectator at public events. The school discipline policies shall remain in effect.

This policy is proactive, not reactive as it relates to the following:

Belief Three under the current Mission Statement: "Each student must share responsibility for his/her own education."

Statement B under the section "Utilize Life Skills" of the current District Outcomes: "Graduates will demonstrate personal attributes that include a positive self-image, maintenance of good health and physical fitness, self-motivation, respect for the opinions of others, and balancing family, work and leisure time."

We believe athletics can and should encourage strong academic performance.

### **Academic Eligibility Policy**

#### **Beginning of School – Three Week Review**

1. Teachers will receive a failure form on September 25<sup>th</sup> to record any students failing a class.
2. Teachers will hand in the failure forms on September 27<sup>th</sup>.
3. Any student that is failing **one or more classes** will become ineligible from competition starting on Monday September 29<sup>th</sup> for a period of one week
4. For the rest of the first marking period, those students affected will need to complete the necessary requirements on a weekly basis to remain on probation.

**At the end of each marking period a student with multiple failures or an average below 70 will be considered ineligible. However, if their cumulative average for the year is passing in a course they failed for the marking period that failure would not count toward ineligibility.**

### **First 2 weeks of ineligibility:**

Once a student becomes ineligible, he/she must not participate in the next 2 weeks of scheduled contests.

1. This will take effect on the following Monday after the teachers grades have been entered.
2. She/he may practice, but not compete.
3. He/she **may not** go on the bus, be with the team or dress in uniform for the event.

### **How an athlete can become eligible after the second week:**

The student may become eligible to participate after the second week of academic suspension if she/he spends additional time during the day and completes a Mandatory Tenth Period Card.

1. A Student must spend a total of 4 hours over the 2 week period of ineligibility.
2. He/she must complete additional time with teachers, (50% of the time in the subject area/s he/she is failing.
3. Students that are ineligible will only be probation on a week to week basis after not participating for a period of 2 weeks.
4. Once a student is deemed ineligible, he/she must fill out a card weekly in order to be on probation for the next week.
5. The student must make a diligent and sincere effort to address his/her academic shortcomings.
6. Teachers must sign the card nightly.
7. The student must continue to complete the weekly cards until the eligibility check at the end of the next marking period or until the athletic season is completed.

### **If an athlete is failing 3 or more subjects:**

If an athlete is failing 3 or more subjects at any eligibility check including the three week review, they will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of that season. In order for the student to participate on a future athletic team they must do the following the week before the start of the season:

- Have each teacher sign a form to document their current grade and turn the form into the Athletic Director.
- Per this form, the athlete will once again be subject to the eligibility policy, and if deemed ineligible again, they will not be able to participate in that athletic season.
- This process will continue each season that academic year until the student is deemed eligible.

### **Students', Coaches' and Advisors' Responsibilities**

To be deemed eligible, a student is responsible to spend the appropriate time with teachers, complete the eligibility card, have it signed and dated, and returned to the Dean or Athletic Director by 3:15 pm on Friday.

1. If the student doesn't complete each one of the tasks, he/she remains ineligible for the next week.
2. It will be the responsibility each week of the coach/advisor and the student to know the status of the student's eligibility by 11:00 am on Monday.

3. Advisors and coaches need to keep an updated list of those students who are cheerleading, on a team, or part of the cast and crew of the play.
4. **Status may be upgraded to probation after the second week upon successful completion of the Mandatory Tenth Period Card. This has to be done on a weekly basis.**
5. An incomplete (Inc.) will be considered a failed grade until it is changed to a grade by the teacher.

#### **X. LEAVING A SQUAD/TRANSFERRING**

In the event a student quits a team, he/she will have 48 hours to personally ask the coach for reinstatement (excluding Saturday, Sundays, or holidays). If the student does not personally apply for reinstatement within the 48-hour deadline, he/she will be permanently dropped from the team. A student may not quit one athletic team to become part of another athletic team during the same sport season without the approval of the coaches involved.

#### **XI. TRANSPORTATION**

1. A player who misses the scheduled bus for an away athletic activity will not be permitted to participate in the activity. A player must use school transportation to athletic events except when the athlete has secured prior permission from the Athletic Director. At an away contest, a student-athlete may be released by the coach directly to the student-athlete's parents for transportation, provided the Parent Release Form is completed and signed.
2. Conduct of athletes while riding school transportation will be subject to regulations for regular bus students. No food or beverage will be permitted on the bus unless the coach and bus driver gives permission.

#### **XII. EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS**

All athletic equipment and uniforms issued at the beginning of a season must be returned to the coach at the end of the season. The uniform has to be clean and ready to be worn the next year. Please advise your coach of any uniform or equipment problems. A student-athlete will not be eligible to participate in a second sport season until all equipment and uniforms are returned. In addition, the student-athlete will be financially responsible for any unreturned equipment or uniforms.

#### **XIII. FAMILY VACATIONS**

When parents/guardians and a student-athlete choose to take a family vacation during a sport season, it must be understood that time missed by the student-athlete can affect team chemistry and personal conditioning. A student-athlete who misses practices or competition for any reason may have his/her position or playing time adjusted. Coaches shall make every effort to inform parents and student-athletes of the season's schedule as far in advance as possible.

#### **XIV. THE SPORTS BANQUET**

The Thomas Edison All Sports Banquet will be held on **Tuesday, June 9, 2015**. There will be a dinner served for all Senior Athletes and their families and guests beginning at 5:30 in the TAE cafeteria. This will be followed by an awards ceremony in the TAE auditorium beginning at 6:30. Awards are kept in secret until the time of their public announcement, so each athlete should be in attendance with their family to receive their award if they are selected. For each Varsity sport there are at least 2 awards given, which are a team MVP

and a Brad Sanford Excellence in Sportsmanship Award. Other Awards given are the male and female Athletes of the Year and various others depending on sport.

#### **XV. BOOSTER CLUB**

Booster Club usually meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7:30 in the TAE library.

#### **XVI. ATHLETIC COUNCIL**

The Athletic Council will consist of the Principal, Athletic Director, two teachers selected by the student, two coaches and a parent. The Athletic Director will serve as the Chairperson of the Council and will preside over all meetings and hearings. The Athletic Council will conduct further meetings at the discretion of the Athletic Director to discuss problems and complaints from parents, coaches, athletes, and members of the community.

#### **XVII. REPORTING VIOLATIONS AND THE APPEAL PROCESS**

1. The importance of enforcement of all regulations should be apparent. A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to prevent a travesty being made of regulations. The community, school administrators, and coaching staff feel strongly about maintaining a sound program of athletics. It is our intent to preserve rules that reasonably pertain to the health and safety of the individual and to the orderly conduct of sports. We do not wish to establish arbitrary personal preferences to ensure absolute uniformity. The welfare of our students is our primary consideration.
2. If an interpretation on a ruling is required, the line of responsibility is the immediate coach, and then the head coach. If necessary, the Athletic Director, the Athletic Council, the Superintendent, and finally the Board of Education will review the situation.
3. In the event an athlete is found in violation of these necessary standards, the coach will initiate a written conduct report. A copy will be forwarded to the Athletic Director. It will be the responsibility of the coach to inform the parent of the violation. Violations will result in penalties ranging from suspension to dismissal from the team as listed in the general rules of conduct.
4. Reports will be investigated that are alleged by a responsible person witnessing or knowledgeable about the incident. These reports must be considered if it is to be determined that the alleged violation is valid.
5. Procedure of Investigation
  - a. Once a written report of a violation has been received from the coach or Athletic Director, the coach will notify the student and parent that an investigation is taking place.
  - b. The student will be given an opportunity to explain his/her involvement in the violation. This will be done with the head coach of that particular sport and/or the Athletic Director.
  - c. The parent and building principal will be notified by the coach of the student's response.
6. Determination of Consequences

The coach will use information from the student interview and investigation to make a decision on the penalty. The particular student will be given consideration determining the penalty as to the type of violation and the previous involvement in other violations.
7. Notification of Penalty

The student and the parent will be notified by the coach within 24 hours of the determination of no consequence, suspension or dismissal, and if desired to inform them of the appeal procedure.

8. Appeal of Decision

- a. An appeal must be made in writing by the student and parent/guardian within (5) five school days to the Athletic Director. At the earliest time, the Athletic Director will schedule a meeting with the Athletic Council.
- b. The Athletic Council will meet in confidentiality with the student, his/her parents/guardians and any witnesses. The Athletic Council's decision will be decided by a majority vote.
- c. The Council can dismiss the disciplinary action, uphold the coach's decision, or institute a more severe consequence. The results of the Council's decision will be sent in writing by the Athletic Director within 24-hours to the coach, athlete, Principal and Superintendent.
- d. An appeal can be made in writing to the Superintendent within (3) three school days. The Superintendent will render a decision within (3) three school days.
- e. If the participant is still not satisfied with the decision, he/she still may appeal to Board of Education in writing with in (3) three school days of the Superintendent's decision. The Board will conduct a review within (2) two weeks after receipt of the appeal.
- f. The student-athlete will not be able to participate in any contests as long as the coach's decision has been upheld through the appeal process.

**PARTICIPATION**

**Participation by a student in athletics activities involves a certain degree of risk and physical injury. Such physical injury can occur in any type of activity, be it a contact or non-contact sport. Furthermore, many injuries are truly accidental in nature and by volunteering to participate in a school-sponsored athletic activity, a student and his/her parents/guardians assume the risks for injuries to occur.**

1. I have read and understand the statement above entitled, “**PARTICIPATION**” and all of the rules of eligibility.
2. I will not use tobacco products, alcohol, and drugs.
3. I will not be involved in illegal or inappropriate activities as defined by this handbook.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read all of the rules and agree to abide by them.  
(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Athletes Signature)

**Permission for Student-Athletes by Parents/guardians to participate in Athletics:**

1. I have read and understand the statement above entitled, “**PARTICIPATION**” and all of the rules of eligibility.
2. I realize the importance of proper sportsmanship and accept the rules as a parent or guardian of the above signed athletes.
3. I give permission for my student-athlete to travel under the coach’s direction and authority from the time of departure until return.
4. I will be responsible for all uniforms and equipment issued to my child. I will return the equipment and uniform or pay the replacement cost.

**I hereby give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the following sports: \_\_\_\_\_.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

In order for the student-athlete to participate, this form must be signed and returned by the parent/guardian or student. A student cannot participate in practice or contest until this form is signed by both parties and returned to the head coach!

**The Elmira Heights Central School District is governed by all regulations and rules set forth by NYSPHSAA, Section IV, and the IAC. Any rules or regulations not set forth in the EHCS Student-**

**Athlete Handbook or Coaches' Handbook, NYSPHSAA, Section IV or IAC will be decided by the EHCSD Athletic Council.**