

# **Island Trees School District**

## **Athletic Philosophy & Policies**

### **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

Interscholastic athletics in the Island Trees Schools are an extension of Physical Education and Health, and an integral part of the educational program. Athletics offer a broadening experience through which all students strive for physical and intellectual harmony and excellence. They connect students to the school and can reinforce the school's first priority, academic achievement. We, therefore, view a well-coordinated program of athletics and academics as vital to student learning.

A majority of Island Trees students compete in interscholastic athletics. Island Trees has traditionally boasted its share of league and county championship teams and all-county and all-league players. However, such measures of success are the outcome, rather than the primary goal, of the athletic program. Of greater and lasting value are the habits of physical conditioning, the love of the sport, the opportunity to learn about oneself and others, and to participate in teamwork. By striving to excel and to win, players should learn to meet both victory and defeat with grace and should come to understand that the quality of their effort is more important than the outcome of a game.

Athletics at Island Trees should be viewed as part of the larger picture of a student's education. Because intellectual excellence is our priority, coaches expect and actively encourage students to do well in class and to meet their academic commitments with wholehearted desire, dedication, self-discipline and commitment.

### **VARSITY PROGRAMS**

At all levels of high school competition, athletes are expected to display desire, dedication and commitment to excellence. Preparing to win, striving for victory in each contest and working to reach full group and individual potential are worthy goals for high school students and teams. To achieve these goals, an athlete must be prepared to make a substantial commitment, which may involve contests or practices six days a week, on holidays and during vacations. Such a commitment demands much of the student and his or her family.

The number of participants on a team is determined by several factors; available playing space and time, student skill level, number and variety of players needed to conduct an effective practice or to play effectively in a contest. In determining which and how many students will participate on a team, coaches consider both benefit to the individual and needs of the group, keeping in mind that each member of the team must have a defined, meaningful role which he or she understands.

Varsity athletes must display a sound attitude, an advanced skill level and a willingness to make the personal commitment of time and energy for that level of competition. While the goal of personal development is important, varsity competition can best be achieved when all strive together to excel and win. As a result, squad size may be limited. Players are expected to understand that the selection to the team and playing time depend on the coach's judgement about how best to balance the individual's skills and role with the goals and needs of the team. Coaches strive to give all participants playing time, but it is not guaranteed.

## **JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAMS**

Junior varsity competition is intended for those with potential to be varsity performers and for those whose ability is not yet of varsity caliber. With an eye to preparing for varsity play, participation at this level requires significant time and commitment and more of both than at the middle school. Coaches emphasize conditioning, skill refinement and the elements, and strategies of team play, attempting to balance individual development, team development and the demands of successful competition. A team member may expect some playing time over a season, but a specific amount is not guaranteed.

## **ACADEMIC PRIORITY**

An athlete is expected to understand that his or her first obligation at Island Trees is to academics. The time from 2:20 to 3:00 P.M. is specifically set aside for academic assistance. Students are expected to bring a teacher's note when they are receiving academic assistance beyond 3:00 P.M.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To participate in an extracurricular activity on any given day, an athlete must be in school by 9 am. If he or she has an appointment that will cause a later arrival, a note must be brought in and approved by administration in order for that athlete to participate that day.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

It is the policy of the Island Trees Union Free School District to provide students with an opportunity to develop their own interests and work cooperatively in groups through the sponsorship of a variety of extracurricular activities. While participation in these activities is desirable, it is also important that students maintain an acceptable level of academic performance and behavior. The following eligibility requirements have been established toward that end. (For the purpose of this policy, extracurricular activity is defined as participation in any non-credit-bearing club, organization or team.)

Attendance: Full day attendance is expected. A student must be signed into school and report to class by 9 am to be eligible to participate in any activity on a given day.

Discipline: Any student athlete who receives an In-School or Out-Of-School Suspension will not be permitted to compete in the next contest or practice that day. A suitable penalty for activities outside of athletics will be determined by a building administrator.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

Provisional Participation: If a student is failing one subject, he or she will be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, provided that he or she attends a minimum of one extra-help class per week in the subject failed. It will be the student's responsibility to ensure that this policy is followed. However, coaches and advisors will periodically check with teachers.

Probationary Participation: If a student is failing two subjects, he or she will be placed on academic probation for a period of ten (10) weeks. While on probation, he or she may continue to participate in extracurricular activities during the probationary period provided that the student:

1. Attends extra help on a regular basis (at least once per week) for each of the two failures.
2. Demonstrates satisfactory effort in all courses.

Ineligibility: If a student is failing three or more subjects, he or she will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for a period for ten (10) weeks. A review of the ineligibility may be requested, five weeks later, when the Interim reports are issued.

## **SPECTATOR'S CONDUCT AT GAMES**

The school encourages parents to share in their child's education by attending games and showing positive, constructive support. Nassau County Athletic Association has worked to improve the sportsmanlike behavior of our athletes and coaches on the field. It is important that, as adults, we help by setting an example. Parents are role models for their children. The following are the spectator guidelines set by Nassau County.

Conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanlike behavior. Respect officials, coaches and players and extend all courtesies to them. Refrain from feet stomping, disrespectful remarks and the use of noisemakers. Be quiet when players need total concentration, such as a free-throw in basketball or a serve in volleyball. Obey the regulations of the building and grounds. Those who do not conform should be brought to the attention of the building authorities. Understand that the schools are responsible for the conduct of their respective spectator, whether at home or away.

## **SPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Nassau County has in effect a sportsmanlike behavior policy that affects all students and athletes. If an athlete is expelled from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct, that athlete

will be suspended for the remainder of that game and the following game. If the athlete is expelled from a second game in that season, he or she will be suspended for the remainder of that sport season. The administration reserves the right to impose additional sanctions if the situation warrants.

### **PROCEDURE IF THERE IS A PROBLEM**

If, at any time, there is a problem with your child concerning his or her athletic participation, I would first encourage the athlete to speak directly with the coach at the appropriate time. If the parent has a question, the athletic staff welcomes the opportunity to talk at an appropriate time. Conversations on a playing field or in a gym are often incomplete and fragmented. All concerns deserve both privacy and time. If after having a conversation with the coach you continue to have a concern, please see the Athletic Director.

### **ATHLETES AND COLLEGE**

If a student athlete is interested in being involved in athletics in college, there are things to be thinking about. There are many opportunities available, but the process should be started during the junior year. First, have the athlete speak with his or her coach and guidance counselor. There is a directory of all colleges and what they offer available in our guidance office.

Any athlete who has intentions of trying out for athletics at a Division I or Division II college must fill out a NCAA clearing house form available through the Guidance Department.

**Good Luck**