

**Keystone Oaks
Interscholastic Athletic Program**

Student/Parent Handbook

2019/2020

The Interscholastic Athletic Program at Keystone Oaks, grades 7-12, is an integral part of the total school program, and is designed to help our students become better citizens.

While academics are the primary focus of our school system, we believe that participation in athletics provides many opportunities and experiences not available in the classroom.

Participation in athletics is entirely voluntary. All students are encouraged to participate but no one is ever required to do so. Since participation is voluntary, any student who desires to participate must be prepared to follow all rules and regulations governing athletics. Those who do not comply will not be permitted to participate.

Keystone Oaks is a member of the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) and the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA). WPIAL and PIAA rules must be followed in all cases of eligibility, transfer, physical examinations, insurance coverage, starting dates, use of school equipment, etc. You are required to remove, sign and submit the last page verifying that you have read, understand and agree to abide by the rules and regulations governing participation in the athletics program at Keystone Oaks.

The following are certain rules and procedures as well as standards of conduct and athletic achievement with which one should be familiar. Many of these rules and regulations have been set by the WPIAL and PIAA. Failure to comply may cause you to lose your eligibility to participate. It is important that you be aware of the requirements.

Summary

This handbook is intended to inform athletes and parents of rules and regulations governing our interscholastic programs. Each coach, however, has the right to make reasonable rules more stringent than those listed in this book. Any rules not addressed in this handbook will revert to Board Policy and the Student Code of Conduct for clarification.

Please do not hesitate to contact your coach or Athletic Director for any questions or clarification of a rule regarding your participation in our interscholastic athletic programs.

The Keystone Oaks School District hopes you enjoy your participation in the athletic programs. We are proud of our Golden Eagle teams and all those student-athletes representing our district. Please remember that what you do and how you act is a direct reflection on your family, school and community.

Age

To participate on a high school team (grade 9-12) you must not have reached your 19th birthday by June 30th immediately preceding the school year. To participate on a junior high team (grades 7-9 or 9th only) you must not have reached your 16th birthday by the June 30th immediately preceding the school year. The requirements follow the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) rules.

Amateur Status

To be eligible for an interscholastic sport, you must be an amateur in that sport. You will lose your amateur status in a sport for at least one year if:

1. You or your school or an organization which you represent, or your parent or guardian, receive money or property for or related to your athletic ability performance, participation or service.
2. You accept compensation for teaching, training or coaching a sport. You may receive normal and customary compensation for acting as an instructor in or officiating recreational activities, or for serving as a lifeguard at swimming areas.

You may receive awards only from your school, the sponsor of an athletic event, the news media or a non-profit organization approved by your principal. Permissible awards are a sweater, jacket, blazer, blanket, shirt, jersey, watch, ring, scroll, photograph, medal, plaque or similar trophy.

Injuries ([Policy 123.1: Concussion Management](#) and [Policy 123.2: Sudden Cardiac Arrest](#))

Any athlete who is treated by a physician for an injury or illness during or prior to a sport season is required to obtain a physician's release before they are permitted to participate in practices or contests. The release must be from a licensed medical physician who is the attending physician of record. A medical release from a chiropractor will not be accepted. All student-athletes must have completed a PIAA pre-participation physical (CIPPE) form prior to the start of their sport season. Physicals are good for one school calendar year from June 1 – May 31.

Parent/Guardian's insurance is responsible for medical bills if their Athlete is injured during conditioning, practice or games.

If a student is receiving school attendance accommodations for a concussion, they cannot attend practices or contests until they have returned to school full time. Prior to participation, all accommodations must be removed and the student returned to a normal class schedule including participation in physical education class. They also must have a full medical release to return. Partial releases are not acceptable.

All parents and students must review and sign the acknowledgement form for [Policy 123.1: Concussion Management](#) and [Policy 123.2: Sudden Cardiac Arrest](#). These are to be turned into the Athletic Director prior to the first practice.

Transportation

Athletes must travel to and from away contests in transportation provided by the school district. At no time will athletes be permitted to drive on their own nor ride to or from away contests with a friend. Situations may occur where, through no attempt to circumvent this rule, an athlete must be driven by a parent. This is acceptable, provided the parent notifies the athletic office or the coach in writing in advance. Athletes may be permitted to ride home from away contests with their parents with prior approval by the coach.

Equipment

Students are responsible for all equipment issued including uniforms and practice clothing. They are expected to return all equipment/uniforms at the end of the season and will be required to pay replacement costs for any items that are not returned or are returned in unsatisfactory condition. Issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of districts practice and competitions. Students are not to use athletic equipment or clothing for gym classes or for participation on teams outside of school. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to your coach, not the athletic office.

Within one week after the close of a season the coach and/or equipment manager will collect all equipment. Failure to return equipment or uniforms will result in the following:

1. Notification to parent/guardian of what is owed.
2. Withholding of report card or awards until uniform/equipment return obligation is met.
3. Not being permitted to participate in subsequent sports seasons until all equipment or uniform debts from previous seasons are collected or reimbursement is made.

Letter Awards

Requirements for earning a varsity letter are established by each coach with the approval of the Athletic Department. Each Coach will determine more specific criteria for earning a letter. Letter awards are achievement awards, not participation awards and will be distributed as such.

School/Practice/Attendance (Board Policy 122: Extracurricular Activities)

At a minimum, students must attend one-half of the school day, with a valid doctor's excuse for late arrive/early dismissal, to be eligible to participate in the extracurricular activities after the school day.

A student may not practice or play if he/she is absent from school the day of practice or contest unless approved by the Principal or Athletic Director. A student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of their absence. Frequent tardiness to school may result in cancellation of participation privileges. Students with early dismissals must return to school following their appointment to be eligible to participate in a contest or practice that day. If a student is absent from school on a Friday, they are not permitted to attend practice or contests over the weekend.

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic contest until he/she has been in attendance for a total of 45 days following his/her 20th day of absence. If the 20th absence occurs in the final semester, the required 45 days of attendance may continue into the following school year before the student is eligible. The exception is where there is a consecutive absence of 5 or more school days due to confining illness, injury or quarantine with a physicians excuse. Attendance at summer school does not count toward the 45 days. (PIAA Rule).

Attendance at practices during the season is mandatory and under the discretion of the coach. Failure to comply with the attendance policies of the coach can result in dismissal from the team.

In the event a student-athlete is suspended (internal or external) from school, they are unable to attend, practice or play in contests throughout the duration of the suspension including the final day. School suspension is considered complete when the student returns to their normal class schedule. All class work must be kept current during suspensions. If the suspension occurs prior to a school break, the student is ineligible to participate throughout the duration of the break.

Dress Code

When traveling to different schools with an athletic team, you are representing the community and Keystone Oaks. The way you look and dress is a direct reflection on the district and your family. As such, you are expected to wear clothes that are clean and appropriate. Coaches have the right to set more specific standards than outlined above.

Quitting a Team

No athlete may quit one sport and turn out for another after the season has begun without mutual consent of both coaches.

Initiations/Hazing/Bullying ([Policy 247: Hazing](#) and [Policy 256: Anti-Bullying](#))

Under no circumstances will initiations, hazing or bullying of any kind be tolerated. Any student involved in hazing, initiation or bullying of another student will be dismissed from the team and appropriately dealt with under the Keystone Oaks School District discipline policy. This will include all types of bullying including cyber bullying and social media bullying.

In the event that a student-athlete becomes aware of any situation involving these types of activities, they must report it to their coach and Athletic Director immediately.

Period of Participation

A pupil shall not represent his/her school in interscholastic athletics if they have surpassed any of the following prior to the year.

1. Been in attendance more than 6 semesters beyond the 8th grade.
2. Played six seasons beyond the sixth grade in any sport.
3. Played four seasons beyond the eighth grade in any sport
4. Completed the work of grade nine, ten, eleven and twelve inclusive.

Academic Eligibility

The athletic office will conduct a weekly grade check. In order to be eligible for interscholastic athletics and cheerleading, a student must have passed or be passing at least four full credit subjects, or the equivalent. Student-athletes who attend Parkway Vo-

Tech must have passed or be passing two full credit classes at Keystone Oaks High School and be passing their classes at Parkway. In the event the student is not passing four credits, they are ineligible to practice or play in contests until the next grade check.

In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards above, the student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for the first fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period.

At the end of the school year, the student's final credits in his/her subjects rather than his credits for the last grading period shall be used to determine his eligibility for the following year. Student who are ineligible to end the year are not permitted to begin sports in the subsequent season until they have attended school for 15 days and have become eligible.

The approved grading scale of the Keystone Oaks School District will be used in determining academic eligibility. An "I" grade and/or an "F" grade will be considered not passing. The Athletic Director will inform the player and the coach when the student is ineligible to participate.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco (Policy 227: Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia & Policy 823: Use of Tobacco and Vapor Products)

The possession, use, furnishing or transmission of narcotics, stimulant drugs, alcoholic beverages, steroids or other unauthorized substances and the use of any tobacco products by student-athletes is strictly prohibited.

The Keystone Oaks School District discipline policy will be applied where there is an infraction dealing with drugs, alcohol or tobacco use.

If a student athlete is cited by the police or other authorities for the use of drugs or alcohol, the coach may administer additional team discipline.

Athletic discipline for Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco/E-Cigarettes/Vapes/Juul are as followed:

- 1st Offense – 1 week suspension from team during regular/post season
- 2nd Offense – 1 month suspension from team during regular/post season
- 3rd Offense – 1 semester suspension from sports
- 4th Offense – 1 calendar year suspension from sports

Any student athlete caught in violation of the athletic discipline will be subjected to their suspension during the next athletic season in which the student participates. Violations occurring during the offseason will be enforced during the athlete's upcoming season of participation, not necessarily of the same sport. Suspensions may be subjected to enforcement during game play.

Social Media (Policy 863: Social Media/Electronic Communications)

As the District has stated, it is a privilege to participate in interscholastic athletics and with that privilege comes certain responsibilities. As an advocate for technology, the District also recognizes the role social media plays in communication and outreach. It is the expectation that our student-athletes will use social media platforms in a positive and respectful manner to engage with family, friends, and the community at large.

Disrespectful, insulting, abusive, and/or threatening content—be it original, re-posted, “re-tweeted” or “liked”—has no place in Keystone Oaks Athletics and will not be tolerated. Student-athletes who post offensive commentary or content aimed at opponents, officials, team members, and/or coaches will be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension from all team activities. Remember, it is a privilege to represent the Keystone Oaks School District in interscholastic competition and we hold our student-athletes to the highest standards for integrity and ethical decisions.

Social Media Tips/Reminders

1. Nothing is really private! Even though you may utilize privacy tools, everything you post is public information.
2. Your content is your thumbprint! Once you post it, it is forever and it is you.
3. Your audience is global. Consider the appropriateness as your audience is young, old, and everywhere. And they are watching!
4. Who is watching? Just a reminder that college coaches and prospective employers often review social media sites to gauge the character of the student.

Parent/Student/Coach Information

1. Any Parent or Student removed from an Athletic Event will not be able to attend the next two (2) events home or away. If this happens a second time the person or persons will be removed from Athletic Events for one (1) year.
2. The Coach will make the call on who he or she will hire as assistant coach or coaches, this is not for discussion by parents or booster groups. This is between the Coach and Athletic Director

3. Playing a sport at Keystone Oaks is a privilege. Let the coaches coach and the players play. If you have an issue follow the chain of command Coach first, Athletic Director second, Building Principal third. The Athletic Director will get the Superintendent involved if needed.

Parents

The Keystone Oaks School District Athletic Department would like to share some suggestions and guidelines for Parents of Student-Athletes. This handbook will give you some insights into the responsibility for Parents of Student-Athletes.

The Player-Coach Relationship

The player-coach relationship is perhaps the most critical relationship in athletics. Sometimes parents have a negative effect on the player-coach relationship. While you may not agree with all decisions of a coach, how and when you express your feelings can have an effect upon your child.

Student-Athletes are expected to interact with the coach in a cooperative manner. Your positive reinforcement at home will help your child, the coach, and the team.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not approach the coach prior to or immediately at the conclusion of a contest. At these times, coaches have many other responsibilities, and it may be an emotional time. Call and make an appointment for a later time, the next day, and approach this meeting in a calm, courteous, and logical manner. We refer to it as the 24 hour rule.

The Parent-Player Relationship

Being positive and supportive is very important in the interscholastic setting. Adding pressures and unrealistic expectations can be extremely harmful to student-athletes. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy, mature, and learn valuable team building skills from athletics.

In several national studies, it has been determined that most athletes participate for enjoyment or fun. Excessive pressure or expectations can alter this most fundamental reason for playing.

Athletics is another form of lifelong learning for students. Stress the importance of team work and leadership skills to your student-athletes, as they will be used for the rest of their life.

Relationship with Officials

Please note that the home school does not pick officials; the commissioner of officials for the particular sport assigns all officials and neither team has control of which officials are assigned.

Officials agree to follow a code of ethics set forth by the PIAA. Officials really do not have a vested interest in which team wins a contest. It is important to understand that they are a necessary part of a game. While you may not agree with all their calls, please do not harass and taunt them. It is important to remember that they are in charge of the contest and have complete authority to have unruly spectators removed. In many sports, a team will see the same official several times during a season. Coaches, athletic administrators, and schools often work hard to establish a rapport and good working relationship which can easily be damaged by spectators.

Spectator-Cheerleader

Cheerleaders try to infuse spirit into the fans/spectators and to lead them in selected cheers. The emotion and atmosphere at athletic contests can be very exciting, and the cheerleaders need to be allowed to direct and control this aspect.

Athletic Chain of Command

If there are any questions or concerns, the athlete should first contact the appropriate coach. If there is no resolution, he or she should then go to the head coach, etc. Parents are instructed to use the chain of command when an issue arises. When the player / parent and coach cannot reach an amicable result, the Athletic Director should be contacted. The Athletic Director will try to resolve any disputes in a timely manner.

Sportsmanship

The PIAA's prides itself on sportsmanship. Since athletics is educational in nature, it is imperative that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship and serve as role models for our athletes and student fans. Sportsmanship is the display of respect for the rules of the sport and for all involved – players, coaches, officials, and fans. It also includes a commitment to fair play, integrity, and ethical behavior.

The following are requirements for good sportsmanship:

1. There must be no inappropriate language from fans or spectators.
2. Taunting opponents and their cheerleaders will not be tolerated.
3. Spectators will be removed from the premise if they leave the bleachers area and enter the court or field during a contest.
4. Fans should be supportive and positive. Cheering should be done for our team and not against our opponent.

Sportsmanship Expectations

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

1. Applause during introduction of players, coaches, and officials.
2. Players shaking hands with opponents who foul out while both sets of fans recognize players performance with applause.
3. Accept ALL decisions of the officials.
4. Cheerleaders lead fans in positive school yells in a positive manner.
5. Handshakes between participants and coaches at the end of contests, regardless of outcome.
6. Treat competition as a game, not a war.
7. Coaches/players search out and congratulate opposing participants or coach.
8. Applause at the end of a contest for performances of all participants.
9. Everyone showing concern for an injured player, regardless of team.
10. Encourage only sportsmanlike conduct.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

1. Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.

2. Booing or heckling an official's decision.
3. Criticizing officials in any way; display of temper with an official's call.
4. Yells that antagonize opponents.
5. Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances.
6. Blaming loss of game on officials, coaches, or participants.
7. Taunting or name-calling to distract an opponent.
8. Use of profanity or displays of anger that show disrespect and draw attention away from the game.
9. Doing your own yells during cheerleader's performances. Sportsmanship...The only missing piece is you!

Responsibilities of an Athlete

Most coaches would expect an athlete to adhere to the following guidelines:

The team's goals, welfare, and success must come before any individual interest.

Basic rules for Athletes:

1. An athlete needs to attend scheduled practice sessions, including weekends and holiday times.
2. Players need to be receptive to the coach staff.
3. Team members are responsible for all issued uniforms and equipment.
4. As a member of a team, an athlete must agree to and follow the team rules.
5. Athletes need to remember that they are ambassadors and represent not only themselves, but the coaching staff and the Keystone Oaks community.
6. An athlete must report all injuries to either the coach or to the athletic trainer.
7. Athletes are reminded that schooling and grades come before athletics.

8. Athletes must maintain and follow attendance policies of the School District.

Responsibilities of a Coach

The coach has the following responsibility:

1. The selection of the team.
2. The determination of the style of play, including the offensive and defensive philosophy.
3. The teaching and instruction at practice sessions.
4. The determination of who starts and how long an athlete plays in a contest.
5. The decision as to who plays and in what position.
6. The establishment of team rules.
7. The selection of team captains.
8. The communications with athletes and parents with respect to when practice sessions will be held and at what time the sessions will start and finish.
9. Determine Lettering procedures for the team. These should be given to the Athletic Director. Based on the Lettering Procedures, the coach will give a Letter list to the Athletic Director no later than two (2) weeks following a season.
10. Carry out all duties given by the School Administration.

Participation on an Athletic Team

It is important to understand that participation on an athletic team is a privilege and not a right. Being on and maintaining one's membership on a team means accepting all the responsibilities of an athlete. Equal or guaranteed playing time does not exist at the high school level. In an effort to win, a coach will use, in his or her opinion, players best suited to the conditions or demands of the contest at a given time.

Practice Sessions and Games

Practice sessions are closed to spectators. These sessions are the equivalent of a teacher's classroom and there is real, quality instruction taking place. Interruptions and interference with athlete's concentration and focus in practice cannot be allowed any more than a disruption would be tolerated in an academic setting. Education in any setting can not be compromised.

Standard District practice session's policies:

1. May last only (3) hours of on-the-court or on-the-field time. Exceptions include time when school is not in session.
2. May start and end at different times due to the schedule of the coach or of facilities.
3. Will not be held when school is closed or dismissed early due to inclement weather.

Thank you for your cooperation and help. We **CAN** do something positive by working together.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR COACH

I have read the student/parent handbook and will uphold these rules and regulations. I understand the penalties that have been established for abusing the privilege of being a part of the Athletic Department at Keystone Oaks School District.

I also acknowledge that I have thoroughly read Board [Policy 123.1: Concussion Management](#) and its attachment as well as [Policy 123.2: Sudden Cardiac Arrest](#) and its attachment. (Both of these policies are available on the District website, www.kosd.org)

Print Student Name: _____

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date