



Willsboro Central School
Athletic Handbook
2025-2026

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Athletic Handbook

Statement of Philosophy

The Willsboro Central School District understands that interscholastic athletics are a significant part of the educational process. The combination of academics and athletics enhances the quality of student lives and expands their options for learning and personal growth. Athletics provide an educational opportunity in which students can learn essential life lessons beyond those that can be learned in an academic classroom.

This reflects our belief that the essential requirement for teamwork, the mental and physical challenges of training and competition, and the experience of winning and losing graciously and respectfully are important life lessons in every student's developmental experience. These lessons will serve students well in their future and beyond.

Overall Athletic Program Goals

Therefore, the primary goals of the Willsboro Central School District Athletic Program are to:

- Promote personal improvement in skills, physical condition, and knowledge of the sport
- Promote programs of excellence that will lead to success on and off the playing field
- Offer students an enjoyable experience
- Provide the greatest opportunity possible for students to participate in both practice and competitions.

Program Expectations

Modified Level Sports:

The program at this level emphasizes:

- Fundamentals of the Game (Skills Development)
- Personal Responsibility
- Good Sportsmanship

Although winning is not the primary aim of this program, the desire to strive for victory is important. Modified sports are the first stage of preparation for higher levels of competition. Adequate playing time is encouraged but may not be equal. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director, will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the student.

Junior Varsity Sports

The Junior Varsity program is designed to prepare students for competition at the varsity level. With the increase in competition at this level, we begin to see a corresponding increase on winning as a goal. While adequate playing time is encouraged, the amount of playing time is influenced by skill level, attendance, attitude, and performance. Other factors such as sportsmanship and effort during practice are also taken into consideration. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the student.

Varsity Sports

At the Varsity level of athletics, playing time becomes very competitive. A more aggressive work ethic and a more advanced skill level are expected. Playing time is earned at this level regardless of age or grade. Discipline, responsibility, and working as a unit are still emphasized at the Varsity level. Playing to win is stressed more for a Varsity team. Coaches, in correspondence with the Athletic Director, will make the ultimate decision as to which level is the best option for the student.

Program Requirements

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Participation as an athlete in WCS programs is contingent on appropriate academic and behavioral performance in school. Students, while under disciplinary restriction or academic ineligibility, will not be allowed to participate. Students on the ineligibility list are expected to follow the procedures outlined in the student handbook, as well as those on the ineligibility form. It is the student's responsibility to complete the form correctly and in a timely manner.

Medical Requirements

Participation in any athletic program at WCS requires that students fulfill the necessary physical examination. Likewise, any student who is injured and referred to a physician or other health care provider must receive written clearance to return to participation. Any student who suffers a head injury accompanied with any concussion-like symptoms will be removed from play until cleared by the School Medical Director. The Medical Director will make the decision whether or not to clear the student based on reviewing a private medical provider's clearance and/or personally assessing the student. The Medical Director may also utilize the "Impact" testing program as a tool to help make their decision. The School Medical Director has the authority to hold the student out of play, clear the student "without restrictions", or to clear the student based on the "Return to Play Guidelines."

Attendance

Participation in any athletic activity requires daily attendance at school. Willsboro Central School requires students to attend a full day of school to be eligible to participate in an athletic event unless they are excused for one of the following reasons:

Religious Observance or Service, Family Death or Funeral, Professional Appointment, College Visitation, Court Required Appearance, Approved School Field Trip, Approved Work Study Employment or Visitation

In order to practice or play in a game on any school day, students must be in school by the beginning of second period and remain in attendance throughout the end of the school day or have a valid excuse such as a medical note. Students not in full-day attendance for other reasons will be ineligible to participate on that day unless excused in advance by the Athletic Director.

Detention and Suspension

Students on suspension, either in-school or out-of-school, are ineligible to attend or participate. Students serving detention will be ineligible to participate that day but are expected to attend practice/game unless it conflicts with the assigned detention.

Behavior

As representatives of the school and community, students are expected to show exemplary behavior. Inappropriate behavior, gestures, or language will generate consequences including any of the following: Reduction of Playing Time, Suspension, or Removal from the Team (In consultation with the Athletic Director and Principal). Additionally, because athletic events are school activities, consequences from the district's discipline code may also apply both in school and on the playing field/court.

Transportation

All students will ride to and from all athletic contests on transportation provided by the school district unless specific permission has been obtained from the Principal or their designee.

A student may be permitted to ride home with a parent, guardian, or other pre-approved alternate adult. Parents choosing this option must provide written authorization for the alternate adult to transport their child. Likewise, this individual must personally see the coach at the game and must sign a written form releasing the school from any responsibility for the student. Parents should be on time to provide transportation for their child after practices and games.

Athletic Dress Code

Our students represent both the school and the community. Therefore, players are expected to dress appropriately, consistent with the district's student dress code, when representing Willsboro Central School. Specific dress requirements may be set by individual coaches.

Equipment and Uniforms

Students and parents will be responsible for the replacement cost of lost or misused items.

Quitting A Sport

Joining an athletic team is a commitment. Students who are designated as team members are expected, barring injury, to complete the season. Any student quitting a team after the season begins is required to meet with the Athletic Director and/or Principal before participating in another sport and may be subject to a suspension prior to starting a new sport.

Chemical-Free Rules

- There will be no use or possession of any tobacco or nicotine products.
- There will be no use or possession of alcoholic beverages.
- There will be no use or possession of drugs (except by physician's prescription).
- There will be no use or possession of drug paraphernalia or vaping devices.
- There will be no attendance at any bar or party where tobacco, alcohol, or drugs are being illegally used.
- Students, who go to a party and notice tobacco, alcohol, or drugs being illegally used, are required to leave immediately.

Penalties for Violating the Chemical-Free Rules

Any violation of the chemical-free rules will automatically result in the loss of rights to captainship.

First Offense

Student loses eligibility to play in games for 2 consecutive weeks including at least 2 games/matches. Students may not attend practices the first week of the suspension. However, they are required to participate in practices during the second week. If there are not 2 weeks left in the season, then the suspension will be carried over to the next sport season. A student may agree to participate and complete an educational program to reduce the game suspension to 1 week. If there are no games during that week, a student must sit out at least 1 game the following week. If the student agrees to participate in an educational program, they can return to participate in practice at the discretion of the Athletic Director. The educational program requirement may extend beyond the length of the suspension. Additionally, if the program is not completed to a satisfactory level, the student may face further suspension.

Second Offense

Suspension from the team for six weeks. If the suspension period extends into another sport season, the student will not be allowed to start that sport season and practice until the conclusion of the suspension period.

Third Offense

Dismissal from the team and suspension for 365 days from the time of the dismissal. Before being reinstated into the interscholastic program the student must meet with the Principal, Athletic Director, and Coach. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be present at the meeting.

For all offenses, students will be referred for substance abuse counseling.

Initiation/Hazing

Hazing or initiation by interscholastic athletic participants is prohibited by the Willsboro Central School District. Violation of this rule will result in suspension or possible removal from the team.

Season Defined

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the student will sign **one contract** that will cover the entire athletic sports year. This will begin with the first day of practice for the Fall Season and end with the last day of school in June. **(A student's contract will begin with the first sports activity they participate in.)**

Health Forms

Even though only one contract will be signed each sports year, an updated health form must be filled out and returned at the beginning of each season. Students may not practice until the health form is completed and returned.

Acknowledgment of Risk

Students and their parents/guardians recognize that participation in interscholastic sports involves a risk of injury. In the event of an accident or injury, coaches and other school personnel are hereby authorized to provide first aid and arrange for such other emergency treatment that they consider necessary.

Insurance

It is the policy of the District that all expenses for student injuries will be first referred to the insurance company of the parent/guardian/student. Expenses not covered by the parent/guardian/student's insurance can then be referred to the insurance carrier of the school district (Pupil Benefits, Inc.). Expenses not covered by either will become the final responsibility of the parent/guardian/student. Accidents must be reported in a timely manner. The school insurance will not cover expenses for injuries, which occur as a result of horseplay or fighting.

Coach's Code

We understand that the Athletics Director and coaches are leaders and are dedicated to more than the X's and O's of competition. As a professional educator, leader, and role model for students, the coach and Athletic Director will:

- Exemplify the highest moral character as a role model for students.
- Recognize the individual worth and reinforce the self-image of each team member.
- Establish a realistic team goal or vision for each season and communicate that to the students and parents.
- Encourage and assist team members to set personal goals to achieve their highest academic potential.
- Support and enforce the athletes' code reflecting the positive values of abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (performance-degrading substances).
- Strive to develop the qualities of competence, character, civility, and citizenship in each team member.
- Provide a safe, challenging and encouraging environment for practice and competition.
- Gain an awareness of the importance of prevention, care, and treatment of athletic injuries.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials.
- Teach and abide by the rules of the game in letter and in spirit.

- Build and maintain ethical relationships with coaches and administrators.
- Strive for excellence in coaching skills and techniques through professional improvement.
- Promote personal fitness and good nutrition.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

Parent's Code

We understand that parents play a vital role in the development of students and the success of our program. Therefore, we encourage parents to:

- Be a positive role model through your own actions to make sure your child has the best athletic experience possible.
- Be a "team" fan, not a "my kid" fan.
- Weigh what your children say; they may slant the truth to their advantage.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups.
- Be respectful of all officials' decisions.
- Don't instruct your children before, during, or after a game, where it may conflict with the coach's plans and strategies.
- Don't approach either team's bench before, during, or after a game.
- Praise students in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the contest.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Help your child learn that success is experienced in the development of their skills and that they can feel good about themselves, win or lose.
- Take time to talk with coaches in an appropriate manner, including proper time and place, if you have a concern. Arrange a private conference with the coach(es)

Disclaimer

No document can foresee all potential situations. Therefore, any confusion over meaning and/or any issues not covered in this document will be referred to the Principal for resolution.