



NEPSAC

Code of Ethics and Conduct

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE STATEMENT

NEPSAC believes in the dignity of all people involved in its scholastic athletic community and endeavors to create an environment in which all student-athletes know that they are welcome and may show up and participate as their authentic selves. The same belief holds true for our coaches, officials, staff, and fans. NEPSAC will not tolerate behavior that discriminates against, demeans, or diminishes a person on the basis of their race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, ability, or any other protected identity. We will uphold, embrace, and champion any actions that lead to a further sense of inclusion and belonging for all.

GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION STATEMENT

NEPSAC believes in the importance of participation in interscholastic athletics for all its positive values: fair play, commitment, teamwork, wellness, and dedication. NEPSAC celebrates diversity both in the wide range of offerings for athletic competition by our member schools as well as the inclusion of all student-athletes. NEPSAC supports *transgender, non-binary and gender fluid youth* in their self-expression, and, in prohibiting bullying, harassment and unfair treatment, seeks to create a safe environment for all students. Recognizing that NEPSAC governs a wide swath of independent schools, The Council recommends that each member school strongly consider and implement its own athletic policies that promote inclusion and honor those of opposing schools, which affirm the identity and expressions of those in our communities.

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

As a basic principle, we believe that the lessons learned from fairly played athletics, whether interscholastic or not, and including games and practices, are of benefit to our student-athletes and our schools. The purpose of this Code of Ethics and Conduct is to define what “fairly played” means and to provide guidelines for NEPSAC student-athletes, coaches, officials and spectators alike to follow.

Purpose of Athletics In Our Schools:

Athletics exist primarily as an essential part of the student-athlete’s full education. As an educational process, they serve these purposes:

1. To teach and instruct student-athletes in the rules, fundamentals and skills of various individual and team sports and to promote wellness.
2. To provide healthy competition and cooperation within and between schools, thus inculcating in each student the best principles of fair play.
3. To develop the other aspects of fair play that will best serve each student-athlete’s education.
4. To maintain the spirit of true amateur competition.

Proper Conduct and Fair Play:

At the heart of this matter lie several terms which are often hard to define—yet no more important task confronts teachers and coaches than to set standards which are fair and honorable. Throughout this Code, when such terms as “proper conduct” and “fair play” are mentioned, they refer to such standards as these:

1. Treat other persons as you know they should be treated, and as you wish them to fairly treat you.
2. Regard the rules of your game as agreements, the spirit or letter of which you should not evade or break.
3. Treat officials and opponents with respect.
4. Accept absolutely and without quarrel the final decision of any official.
5. Honor visiting teams and spectators as your own guests and treat them as such. Likewise, yourself behave as an honored guest when you visit another school.
6. Be gracious in victory and defeat; learn especially to take defeat well.
7. Be as cooperative as you are competitive.
8. Remember that your actions on and off the field reflect on you and your school.

Guidelines For Coaches:

1. Coaches shall remember that school athletics are primarily part of each student-athlete’s education, not a goal in themselves. Coaches shall use athletics to help each student-athlete achieve the standards listed above.
2. Coaches shall assist each student-athlete toward developing their fullest potential in athletics.
3. Coaches shall remember that the behavior of a team can reflect the coach’s own manner, attitudes, temper and approach to athletics, and shall conduct themselves in a way which brings credit to themselves, their team, their school and their sport.
4. Coaches shall be responsible not only for coaching their teams, but also for running games, dealing fairly and properly with officials, meeting before and after games and visiting coaches and players, and maintaining an objectivity and sense of balance commensurate with fair. Coaches shall in particular preserve the tradition of shaking hands after games and matches.

Guidelines For Student-Athletes:

1. Student-athletes shall at all times represent themselves and their school with honor, proper conduct, and fair play. They shall understand that competitive rivalries are encouraged, but that disrespect for opponents is unsporting and lessens the value of the rivalries. They shall confine the competitiveness of the game to the field, and in particular behave properly on the sidelines and in the locker rooms both before and after games.
2. They shall comply fully with the rulings of the officials. In no way, either by voice, action or gesture, shall they demonstrate their dissatisfactions with the decisions made.
3. Players will not deface property or remove equipment of any kind from their own or another school.

Guidelines For Paid Officials:

1. Officials shall arrive at school well in advance of game time, making themselves available to coaches and other officials, and shall be prepared to start the game on time.
2. They shall, in dress, conduct, and knowledge of the game rules, advance the objectives of NEPSAC’s commitment to DEIJ Code of Ethics and Conduct.
3. They shall bring understanding and patience to situations that involve young players who err through lack of skill, experience, and maturity.
4. Officials shall deliver in energy and speed their fullest capacities. The association requires, regardless of the level of the game or the size of the fee, that officials always give their best.

Guidelines For Spectators:

1. Spectators—whether students, faculty, parents, alumni or friends—bear important responsibilities to the school for the atmosphere and conduct of games, whether home or away.
2. Spectators should watch games from those areas defined by each school as spectator areas. They must not run up and down sidelines, call to players, coaches or officials in a manner unbecoming to their school, go onto the field of play, or deface property. Any action that detracts from the ability of coaches, players and officials to do their best is not acceptable.
3. Faculty members should remember that their responsibilities for student discipline and behavior extend to disciplining and controlling students who misbehave as spectators.
4. The use of alcohol and illegal drugs should not be associated with any athletic event.

These standards are ones that NEPSAC expects all student-athletes, coaches, officials and spectators to meet.

Expulsion Rule

Players or coaches who are ejected from interscholastic officiated contests for “poor conduct” or other flagrant behavior will forfeit their eligibility to play or coach in the next regularly scheduled interscholastic officiated contest or tournament contest played in that sport. We encourage a conversation between athletic director, coach and disqualified offender.

Middle School Spirit of Competition:

Along with the rules for middle school play, coaches should play with a good spirit of competition. NEPSAC’s stance on DEI and its Code of Conduct and Ethics provides the framework on which all game behavior should be based. Beyond that, middle school coaches should intentionally make the game a positive experience for everyone involved—student-athletes on both teams, coaches, officials and spectators. This means taking a leadership role with your team and setting standards of behavior. Running up the score, keeping a press on in a basketball game when the outcome is clearly evident, putting your starters in as a group when the score is already lopsided, and continuing a run and gun style of play rather than emphasizing passing and a set offense, all represent examples of coaching strategy which do not meet the intended spirit of middle school competition.