

North Hunterdon-Voorhees Parent/Athletic Communication Policy

Both parenting and coaching are extremely tough jobs. By establishing an understanding for each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a better experience for the student athlete. As a parent, when your child becomes involved in a North Hunterdon/Voorhees High School athletic program, you have a right to understand the expectations that are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

PARENT MUST FOLLOW THE EIGHT CHAIN OF COMMAND STEPS:

1. Athlete to immediate coach,
2. Athlete to immediate coach / Head Coach,
3. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach,
4. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach / AD,
5. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach / AD / Assistant Principal,
6. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach / AD / Assistant Principal / Principal,
7. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach / AD / Assistant Principal / Principal / District Office,
8. Parent and Athlete to Assistant Coach or Head Coach / AD / Assistant Principal / Principal / District Office / BOE.

The Following Procedures Should be followed to Help Promote a Resolution:

1. Take 24 hours to reassess the issue. Possibly discuss the situation with a spouse, son/daughter or friend to determine an objective analysis of the situation.
2. Email the immediate coach to review your concerns. Please allow 24 hours for a response.

Communication You Should Expect from Your Child's Coach:

1. The philosophy of the coach.
2. The members of the coaching staff specifically working with your child.
3. Expectations the coach has for your child and the team
4. Locations and times of all practices, contests and team functions.
5. Team requirements, such as Booster Club, Special Equipment, Off-season conditioning and team rules.
6. Procedures to be followed should your child be injured during practice or a contest.
7. Discipline procedures that may result in the denial of your child's participation.

Communication Coaches Should Expect from Parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.
4. Specific medical problems that could adversely impact your child's performance and/or safety.

As your child becomes involved in the athletic programs at North Hunterdon/Voorhees High School, they will experience some of the greatest and most rewarding moments of their young lives. It is also vital to recognize and understand that there will be times when things do not go the way you or your child wish. At times such as these, discussion with your child's coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:

1. Treatment of your child mentally and/or physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about the behavior of your child.
4. Family concerns that may have an impact on your child and subsequent athletic participation.



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It is very difficult to accept your child's not playing as much as you hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all members of a team. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as the following items, must always be left to the discretion of the coach.

The Administration evaluates coaches on many different categories but not limited to: How hard they work, dedication, sport knowledge, safety and security, role modeling, professionalism, following school and competition policies, handling injuries, etc. We do not evaluate coaches on their game records. The coaches have various student athletic talent each year and we do not want coaches to harass, intimidate or bully kids into trying to win games. We encourage our coaches to do the best for the talent that they currently have in place. The levels of competition for every school and every level change each year. Winning all your games you freshmen year does not mean they will win all their games their senior year. The Administration is more concerned with a positive experience for kids than wins or losses.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss With Coaches:

1. **Playing time.** Please do not twist events around that ultimately lead to Playing Time discussions. Playing Time is up to the Coaches!
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Lineups
5. Substitutions
6. Other members of the team
7. Officials

Unacceptable Contact with your Child's Coach:

1. Prior to and during team practice
2. Prior to and during any contest
3. Immediately following any contest

These are typically either very busy times, or in the case of a contest, very emotional times for all parties involved. Things can and will be said that are not meant. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties have a clear understanding of the others position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure and chain of command should be followed to promote an understanding.

We ask you to always make contact with the coach first. Though we understand your desire to talk with the Athletic Director or Principal first, such contacts will be first referred to the appropriate coach.

Know the difference between coaching and Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying:

1. Click [HERE](#) to review the definition of (HIB) Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying.
2. Examples that are not HIB:
 - a. Your son or daughter running off the playing field crying due to being replaced in the game by another athlete. My child is not getting equal playing time.



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Note: Children at the introductory level of sports programs get equal opportunity and approximate equal playing time. By the time they reach the middle school age, the equal-playing time debate should end. Some children have more natural ability and some practice more intently to develop athletic abilities. Those students with superior skills are rewarded with more playing time. There is a reason for keeping score. In the process of assessing capabilities, all students will not receive the same academic grades; all students will not receive the same amount of stage time in plays; and all athletes will not receive an equal amount of playing time in sports.

- b. A coach playing a player in a certain position that parent or student does not agree to support the coach's game plan.
- c. A coach shouting out instructions to get a players attention for game management.

Note: If a coach is swearing or doing something of a criminal nature then notify the athletic Director. Other than that, a coach is allowed to shout out instructions for practice and game management.

- d. A coach having an athlete do a workout that they do not approve.
- e. Claiming mental abuse and self-esteem is destroyed when a coach has a student practice or perform to follow their game plans.

Note: There is no definite answer to this question. Self-esteem is defined as "pride in oneself...self-respect". When an athlete works hard to develop a skill and can successfully apply it, they develop self-esteem. An athlete feels good about themselves and their accomplishment. In another situation, if an athlete does little to develop their skills, makes constant errors, and is embarrassed with their play, not willing to accept constructive criticism, it will be unlikely for them to develop self-esteem. Self-esteem comes at a steep price. There's no easy or magical way to acquire it. It's ultimately up to each athlete to determine for themselves how, or even if they are to attain their personal self-esteem.

- f. My child got cut from the team and his self-esteem is destroyed.

Note: Prior to each sport season, coaches discuss a range of issues pertaining to the upcoming season. One of those issues relates to "the selection of teams". During this meeting they discuss a "team selection procedure" that minimizes the negative impact for the student who fails to make the team. Our "squad-cut policy" includes, but is not limited to (1) an honest and open discussion of the skills needed to compete in the sport, (2) an explanation of the approximate size of the squad, and (3) the number and dates of try-out sessions. Parents and students should understand that team composition must be considered. For example, a football coach cannot keep fifteen (15) 150 pound running backs, or a basketball team ten (10) 5'8" point guards, regardless of how good they may be. There are other factors to be considered in assessing the talents for the other positions. However, it is our belief that every coach makes an honest effort to select the best players available to create the right climate for a successful "team".

- e. My senior daughter did not play much this season, this was the coach's fault, this is bullying my daughter.

Note: Each member of the team is very valuable to the team's overall progress. Some members may play a great deal of time in a contest while others may not see what a parent would consider significant playing time. There will be athletes on the team that start the athletic contest but this role is not guaranteed every game. Coaches will strategically play the best players at the particular time of the game or by the particular competition. Coaches, by the nature of their jobs, must look at the "big



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picture. It is the team that wins contests, not individuals. Coaches strategically play the best players during particular portions of a game or in particular competitions, so that the team has the best chance of winning. We remind parents and athletes that coaching decisions are made for the good of the team as a whole and for the future of the program, not just for the results of a single game or for the benefit of a single individual. Unfortunately, in a competitive interscholastic sports program, members of a team are not guaranteed or entitled to playing time. Therefore, each student athlete should have a personal improvement plan as one of their goals. Participation in athletics, like other extra-curricular activities, is a privilege, not a right under New Jersey state law.

6. etc.

By Law, when a Parent says that their child has been Harassed, Intimidated or Bullied. The required paperwork must be filed immediately by the Parent or Student:

- [VHS Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Report Form](#)
- [NHHS Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Report Form](#)

3. Please be reminded that coaches may due the following for false claims about their coaching performance/character:
- a. File a (HIB) Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying report on a parent or student
 - b. File a libel suit against the parents of a student for defamation of character, Slander, Torment, etc. of a false claim against a coach.

If you have a concern to discuss with a Coach, follow the chain of command steps on page 1 and refer to the information below:

1. Have your child talk to the coach
2. Email the coach to set up an appointment.
3. If the coach cannot be reached, email the North Hunterdon or Voorhees High School Athletic Department to reach the coach for you.

What a Parent can do if the meeting with a Coach did not provide a Satisfactory Resolution.

1. Email the Athletic Director at North Hunterdon or Voorhees High School and set up a meeting.

Research indicates a student involved in an extracurricular activity has a greater chance of success during adulthood. Therefore, our programs have been established specifically for our student athletes. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote successful lives and careers after high school. We hope the information provided in this document makes both your child's experience and your experience with North Hunterdon/Voorhees High School and its athletic programs less stressful and more enjoyable.

For further information. Please refer to the **North Hunterdon Athletic Philosophy and Expectations** document that was signed with initial physical paperwork Voorhees parents please review the **Profile of the ideal parent at VHS.**

