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<https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/sola/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>

## **Introduction**

The Solanco School District Student-Athlete Handbook aims to inform our student-athletes and parents of the rules, regulations, and information for participation in interscholastic athletics. It is a privilege that carries honor, responsibility, and commitment. Since participation is a privilege and not a right, those who choose to participate are expected to follow the rules and regulations developed by their head coach and adhere to the Code of Conduct established by the Solanco School District (SSD) in collaboration with the Solanco Athletic Department (SAD). Students who participate in the SSD interscholastic athletic program are expected to represent the Solanco School District, their families, and the community with class and in a positive manner.

The Solanco School District is a member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA District III), and therefore we are bound by the rules and regulations of that governing body. In addition, the Solanco School District and its athletic teams are a member of the Lancaster-Lebanon League.

## **Solanco Expectations**

**Responsibility:** Act responsibly and take responsibility for one's actions.

**Respect:** Treat themselves and each other with respect.

**Kindness:** Act with kindness when dealing with others.

**Courage:** Act with courage every day.

## **Solanco Mission Statement**

Three simple words!

Connect - Inspiring - Empowering

## **Solanco Athletic Philosophy**

The athletic program is an extension of the education system. It is designed to provide student-athletes with the opportunity to develop and advance their physical, mental, emotional, and social capabilities through interscholastic sports. Evidence shows that athletic participation may also positively influence a student's development within an academic arena.

Each sports program is dependent on the head coach to give purpose and direction. Inherent in leadership, the head coach should articulate the need for an environment of competitiveness at all levels. At all grade levels, in all programs, it is essential to maintain consistent approaches in developing the competitive nature while preserving the integrity of the sport and emphasizing sportsmanship.

Our goal is to provide quality coaching, facilities, and equipment in our quest to develop highly competitive athletes. Our program's success depends on the ongoing development of talent, the support of multiple sports participation, the expertise of our coaching staff, and our school district's commitment to the realignment within the league according to enrollment to create a competitive balance.

Although competition is an inherent factor in our contest, and winning is important, it is not the highest single goal; our ultimate goal is striving to win while exhibiting good sportsmanship and assisting with the overall development of the individual athlete.

See Solanco Board Policy #123 - Interscholastic Athletics

### **Goals of the Athletic Department**

1. To provide an athletic program for the student body that will be competitive and motivate students to strive to win the right way.
2. To facilitate the head coach as the coordinator for their respective segment of the athletic program.
3. Encourage dialogue, rapport, and support among coaches, athletic participants, and the athletic department.
4. To provide the district support for the entire athletic program, including qualified staff, supplies, equipment, and facilities deemed essential for the program's operation.
5. To support, encourage, and monitor the development and progress of our student-athletes with hopes of assisting them towards becoming the best version of themselves.
6. To provide administrative support for the realignment of the Lancaster-Lebanon Athletic League to accommodate the strengths of the Solanco Athletic Programs.

### **Requirements for Participation (Board Policy #123, #211)**

Participation on an athletic team requires that a student meet the following condition:

- Satisfy all Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and Solanco School District (SSD) eligibility standards.
- Adhere to the SSD codes of conduct, the school building you attend, the athletic department, and your individual sports teams.
- Submit ALL required forms by the announced deadlines.
- Solanco Students MUST:
  - Pass a physical examination by a physician (CIPPE)
  - Obtain their parents' consent on a form issued by the athletic director
  - Obtain a medical insurance policy or present evidence through an affidavit that parents have appropriate coverage
  - Sign and return a Solanco Interscholastic Athletic Contract
  - Sign and return the drug testing participation form
  - Sign and return the Student-Athlete handbook meeting form

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- **Age - (PIAA constitution and by-law: Article I, section 1)<sup>1</sup>**

Maximum age rule: A student shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition upon attaining the age of nineteen years, with the following exception:

If the age of 19 is attained after July 1, the student is eligible, age-wise, to compete throughout the school year. (Pg. 11)

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, 2021. *PIAA constitution and by-laws*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Handbook%20-%20Section%20I%20-%20Constitution%20and%20By-laws.pdf>> [Accessed 9 April 2022].

In sports where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 through 9, the student may not have reached the age of 16 by June 30, for that school year.

In sports where interscholastic competition is limited to grades 7 & 8, the student may not have reached the age of 16 by June 30, for that school year.

- **Amateur Status - (PIAA Constitution and by-law: Article II, section 1)**

To be eligible to participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, and/or Contest, a student must be an amateur in the sport involved. An amateur student is one who engages in social, and pleasure benefits derived thereof and does not receive monetary or similar or equivalent compensation or remuneration for such participation.

A student may accept, from the sponsor or sponsors of an athletic event or group of athletic events, items of apparel, a blanket, watch, ring, scroll, carry-on, warm-up bag, photograph, medal, plaque, or similar award, with appropriate institutional insignia or comparable identification, if the student participated in the athletic event and/or earned an award for an athletic event or events. The fair market value of items provided to any such student may not exceed \$750. Such sponsor or sponsors may also pay the expenses for a student to participate in educational programs, tours and field trips provided by the sponsor or sponsors in connection with athletic even or events.

- **Attendance - (PIAA Constitution and by-law: Article III Section 3)(Policy #204)**

A student who has been absent from school during a semester for a total of twenty (20) or more school days, is ineligible to participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, or contest until the student has been in attendance for a total of forty-five (45) school days following the student's twentieth (20th) day of absence.

Middle School-athletes must be in attendance before 11:00 am to participate in interscholastic practice or competition on that day. High School student-athletes must comply with the 9:15 am sign-in time in order to participate in interscholastic practice or contest on that day. Any lateness beyond 9:15 am will require a note from a licensed medical provider to be considered excused. Hand-written notes will not qualify as excused and allowed to participate. (SSD)

An attendance irregularity during the last day of classes of the school week will make the student ineligible for activities during the weekend. Exceptions for absences for educational, religious, and medical reasons will be made when prior approval from the student's assigned secondary school office has been granted.

The following reasons are acceptable for and excused lateness:

- ✓ Doctor/dental appointment
- ✓ Emergency at home (parents need to call)
- ✓ Power failure within the District
- ✓ Late school bus
- ✓ Severe weather conditions
- ✓ Other reasons will be determined on case-by-case bases.

- **Consent of Parent/Guardian - (PIAA Constitution and by-law Article IV Section 1)**

Except as otherwise provided in this ARTICLE, a student is eligible to participate in Practices, Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages, and/or Contests in each sport only when there is on file with the student's Principal, or the Principal's designee, a certificate of consent, which is signed by the student's parent or guardian. The only valid certificate of consent is the PIAA Parent's/Guardian's Certificate.

- **Health - (PIAA Constitution and by-law: Article V Sections 1-3)**

**Section 1. Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation.** No student is eligible to participate in Practices, Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages and/or Contests unless the student has completed a comprehensive initial pre-participation physical evaluation ("CIPPE") performed by an Authorized Medical Examiner, and the Authorized Medical Examiner has completed the PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation Form ("CIPPE Form"). **Section 2. Certification.** By signing the PIAA CIPPE form, the Authorized Medical Examiner certifies that the student is physically fit to commence 2021-2022 BY-LAWS 17 Practice and participate in Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages and/or Contests in the sport(s) approved by the student's parent. In certifying whether a student is physically fit to participate in Practices, Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages and Contests in a particular sport(s), the Authorized Medical Examiner (a) is expected to have or, if not already in possession of it, obtain, a working understanding of the physical requirements of the sport(s) in which the student is to practice and participate; (b) should review a health history of the student; and (c) should perform a CIPPE appropriate for the sport(s) for which certification is being sought. **Section 3. Re-Certification.** Any student who (1) previously participated in PIAA interscholastic athletic competition pursuant to a CIPPE; and (2) is seeking to participate in Practices, Inter-School Practices, Scrimmages, and/or Contests in subsequent sport(s) in the same school year, must, not earlier than six weeks prior to the first Practice day of the next sports season, complete and turn in to that student's Principal the Re-Certification by Parent/Guardian part of the CIPPE Form. The Principal, or Principal's designee, of that student's school must review the Supplemental Health History of that student and, if any Supplemental Health History questions are either checked yes or circled, shall require that student to submit a completed Section 8, Re-Certification by Licensed Physician of Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine, to the Principal, or Principal's designee of that student's school prior to that student's additional participation in interscholastic athletics.

Complete the PIAA physical application (CIPPE) found on the Student or Parent Portal on/after June 1. Print the completed forms and return them in person, by email, or US mail after the physician's signed to the SDD Athletics Office (completed section 7). All forms must be completed and returned to the High School Athletic Office at 585 Solanco Rd, Quarryville, PA 17566. Originals' must be turned into the office. PIAA Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (CIPPE) can be found on the Solanco Website ([www.solanco.org](http://www.solanco.org) - click on the athletics tab) or at the high school/middle school offices.

- **Period of Participation - (PIAA Constitution and by-law: Article VII)**

Generally, students are provided the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics for a four-year period which begins at the conclusion of their eighth grade year and ends four years later, regardless of whether the student advances academically or actually participates in interscholastic athletics during this period. The purposes of this limitation are as follows: (1) to provide basic equality of potential eligibility among athletes as each student is afforded the same basic number of semesters of potential athletic eligibility without regard to the number of years it takes the student to complete the high school curriculum; (2) to permit a greater number of students the opportunity to start and play interscholastic athletics; and (3) to discourage athletic red-shirting, the practice of holding students back in grades so that they will gain more experience, size, and ability before graduating from high school.

- **All-Star Contests (PIAA Constitution and by-law: Article IX, Section 2)**

Students participating in Contests which are advertised or promoted as all-star Contests and/or in which students are selected based upon reputation of the athletes and/or recommendation or

referral by other persons are ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics in the involved sport(s) for a period of up to one year from the date of such participation.

- **Curriculum (PIAA Constitution and by-law Article X, Section 1-3)**

To be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition, a student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the Principal as a full-time curriculum. Where required, this curriculum or its equivalent must be approved by, and conform to, the regulations of the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania School Code, as well as any local policies established by the local School Board. The student must be passing at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent. Eligibility is cumulative from the beginning of a grading period, must be reported on a weekly basis, and must be filed in the Principal's office. Where a student's cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period does not as of any Friday meet the standards provided for in this Section, the student is ineligible from the immediately following Sunday through the Saturday immediately following the next Friday as of which the student's cumulative work from the beginning of the grading period meets the standards provided for in this Section. Where a school is closed on a Friday for any reason, the Principal may, at the Principal's election, determine whether the student as of that day meets the standards provided for in this Section.

**Section 2.** To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must have passed at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent, during the previous grading period, except as provided in Section 5. Back work may be made up, providing it is in accordance with the regular rules of the school.

**Section 3.** In cases where a student's work in any preceding grading period does not meet the standards provided for in Section 2, said student is ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for at least fifteen (15) school days of the next grading period where the school has four (4) grading periods per school year, or for at least ten (10) school days of the next grading period where the school has six (6) grading periods per school year, beginning on the first day report cards are issued, except as provided in Section 5.

**Out of season participation**

All PIAA sports have a defined season. If your school team conducts practice and/or participates in interschool practices, scrimmage and/or contests outside of that PIAA defined season, your school will be penalized.

**Participation of Secondary Homeschooled Students in Interscholastic Athletics**

Homeschooled secondary students residing within the Solanco School District shall be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at the age group school within their regular attendance area. Each student shall be required to follow the team rules, the policies of the Solanco School District, and the rules and regulations of the PIAA.

Transportation to and from scheduled practices and events is the responsibility of the parents of the homeschooled students, except where the District provides team transportation.

**Procedures and Responsibilities:**

Parents of homeschooled students who wish to have their children participate in interscholastic athletics within the school district have the following responsibilities:

1. Register their child/ren with the school district central office by March 15 of the year previous to the one during which they wish to participate.
2. Submit completed CIPPE documents and related forms to the District's athletic trainer before participation in tryouts, practices, or competitions.
3. Before participation, verify with the school's Central Office the following conditions:



- a. Their child was enrolled in and passed a minimum of four (4) full-year subjects during the last school year. This is the equivalent of four (4) credits.
  - b. Their child was not absent from instruction for more than twenty (20) days during the previous semester unless eligible for exemption as stated in Article III, Section 2 of the PIAA by law.
  - c. Their child is enrolled in four (4) full-year, four (4) credit equivalent courses during the current school year.
4. After participation has begun, notify weekly or daily as directed by the district Athletic Director if the student does not meet SSD and PIAA eligibility requirements for academic or attendance reasons.
  5. The Solanco School District will perform the following responsibilities:
    - . Announce and supervise the registration process.
      - a. Announce physical exam information through the local media.
      - b. Contact parents of homeschooled students with information regarding SSD and PIAA academic and attendance requirements for interscholastic eligibility.
      - c. Furnish the name(s) and related information of any homeschool students wishing to participate in interscholastic athletics for the school year to the appropriate coach (es).
      - d. Contact registered parent(s)/ student(s) with information about orientation meetings, schedules, tryouts, practices, etc., for the upcoming season.

#### **Participation of Charter School Students in Interscholastic Athletics**

Secondary students attending any charter school within the Solanco School District would be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics as long as the attending charter school did not offer the specific sport the student-athlete is interested in playing. The student would be required to follow the team's rules, the policies of SSD, and the rules and regulations of the PIAA in accordance with their participation. The charter school would be assessed a fee for its student electing to participate on the SSD-sponsored team, and transportation would be up to the student's family to provide.

#### **Procedures and Responsibilities:**

1. The SSD athletic department will announce physical exam information and tryout practice information on the athletic website.
2. According to the announced timeline, charter school students who are to participate in interscholastic athletics should submit a completed CIPPE and related forms to the district athletic trainer. They may contact the athletic office for information about orientation meetings, schedules, tryouts, practices, etc., for the upcoming season.
3. The athletic office will inform the Learning Enrichment and Student Service Office (LE/SS) of the names of any charter school students who have submitted a completed physical exam packet and the participation fee to be billed to the charter school.
4. The LE/SS office will notify the charter school of the participation fee for their students, and the procedure for prorated billing includes (coaches' salaries, equipment, supplies, transportation, reconditioning, dues & fees, rental, official's compensation, and meals & lodging).
5. The athletic office will send the "interscholastic eligibility" memorandum and the packet to the charter school at the beginning of each sports season. This packet details the SSD and PIAA academic and attendance requirements for interscholastic eligibility.



6. The charter school will notify the athletic office promptly of its students participating in interscholastic athletics who do not meet eligibility standards.
7. Charter school students must arrange for their transportation to and from practices and competitions at sites from the charter school of home and to the departure site for any teams traveling to away contests.

### **Participation of Career and Technology training (CTC) students**

Students who are full-time at the CTC campuses and provide their transportation to their school have the opportunity to drive TO and FROM all athletic contests. Documentation must be on file with the AD that parents give authorization for the student-athlete to do this.

### **Codes of Conduct**

A team coach may establish and publish, with approval and consent of the Principal and/or athletic director, reasonable rules that complement those rules/policies that have been instituted by the District, individual schools, and the athletic department.

### **School behavior and citizenship**

Student-athletes are expected to conform to the general code of behavior for the building they attend. Violations of that code that result in a suspension (In-school or out-of-school) will affect the student athlete's participation. When a student has been suspended out-of-school, the student may not visit the district campus for the duration of the suspension, nor may the student participate in any extracurricular activities, including athletic practices or competitions. Students may resume participation on the day that they resume regular school attendance.

When a student is suspended in school, participation is the same as out-of-school suspension.

They may resume participation on the day following the completion of the in-school suspension. Additionally, a coach may set a more restrictive rule if missing practice due to any suspension, influencing student athletes' preparation for competition.

### **Sportsmanship**

As a PIAA member school, we are committed to the goal that sportsmanship is recognized as an essential part of interscholastic athletics. Sportsmanship is generally defined as the display of respect for the rules of the sport and all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at any event. Solanco student-athletes are EXPECTED to behave to demonstrate fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity when part of any team activity. Any actions or comments intended to taunt, bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others in the athletic arena will not be tolerated. Should the student-athlete exhibit such behavior during practice, the individual will be addressed by the coach and may receive consequences of either (1) a reduction in participation, (2) suspension, or (3) dismissal from the team. Suppose any student-athlete should be ejected from a contest by a governing official due to unsportsmanlike behavior. In that case, PIAA rules state the student-athlete will also be suspended for the following calendar scheduled game. Should the suspension occur during the season's final contest, it will carry over to the next season. The athletic department also reserves the right to add additional suspensions should they be warranted.

### **Hazing (SSD Board policy No.74) (PA statutes title 24 PS Education 5352)**

Hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health, or safety of a student for the intention of team initiation or membership; for our purposes, this refers to any sports team recognized by the Board of School Directors. Whether by an individual or a group, any hazing activity shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student participates willingly.

The SSD has a ZERO tolerance policy for any form of initiation (i.e., hazing) as part of any school-sponsored interscholastic sports team activity. The District has adopted a policy

prohibiting the involvement of students, volunteers, and employees in any hazing activity; No student-athlete, coach, volunteer, or District employee shall plan, encourage, assist, or engage in any hazing activity.

Student-athletes who attempt to engage in any hazing style will be suspended indefinitely.

Understanding that this should make for an uncomfortable situation for anyone involved, directly or indirectly, the athletic department allows individual team members to report weekly events to their coaching staff. The coaching staff will distribute communication cards to be administered weekly. All cards will be returned to the athletic department with concerning comments brought to the Athletic director's attention. Student-athletes will have opportunities to express concerns in a timely and confidential manner.

#### **Tobacco (SSD Board Policy No 222)**

The objective of this policy is to provide a tobacco-free environment. The policy bans the use of all forms of tobacco products on school property or at school activities. In keeping with this policy, the athletic department prohibits the use of the tobacco products by coaches, student-athletes, and support personnel while taking part in school-sponsored, whether with the guidelines of the policy and second under the following athletic department procedure:

- First Offense - Suspension from practice and competition for one week from the violation date.
- Second Offense - Suspension for the remainder of the season.
- Third Offense - Suspension from ALL activities for the remainder of the school year.

Any suspension will be accompanied by a letter documenting the incident in the student's school file.

#### **Drugs and Alcohol (SSD Board Policy 227.1)**

The school district's drug and alcohol policy aims to eliminate the improper use of drugs, behavior-altering substances, and performance-enhancing substances in our schools, on school property, on school conveyances, and at school-sponsored events. In keeping with district objectives, the athletics department believes interscholastic athletics is vital in promoting and maintaining a drug-free environment. Student-athletes violating the policy will first be dealt with according to the general policy in which all controlled substance violations are level IV in code of conduct violations.

#### **Steroids (PA act 93 of 1990)**

The use of steroids continues to be a problem that plagues athletics. Student-athletes must be aware of the dangers of steroids and the consequences of their use. The Pennsylvania legislature has passed legislation explicitly prohibiting steroids in athletics in the Commonwealth. The provisions of this Act and the consequences for violations supersede the SSD Board of Directors' policies on the use of drugs or alcohol.

- First Offense - Suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the current season.
- Second Offense - Suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the current season and the following season.
- Third Offense p Permanent suspension from school athletics.

#### **Drug Testing Policy/Violations SSD Board Policy 227.2**

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To create and maintain a safe, drug-free environment for all students participating in interscholastic athletics and students with driving privileges.
2. To protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of all students.

3. To reduce the likelihood of accidents, injuries, or property damage resulting from student drug use.
4. To prevent disruption that would negatively impact interscholastic athletics or student safety while on school grounds.
5. To provide students with access to assistance and treatment for drug and alcohol abuse.

Should any student test positive for a drug test under this policy, they shall be subject to the following restrictions.

- First Offense - The student will be suspended from participating in athletics for thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the confirmed positive test result.
- Second Offense - The student will be suspended from participating in athletics for one (1) calendar year from the date of the confirmed positive test.
- Third Offense - The student will be suspended from participation in athletics for the remainder of his/her enrollment within the SSD. If the student transfers during the suspension, the suspension will be honored and enforced at the student's newly-enrolled school.

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying (SSD Board policy 252)**

The objective of the school district's bullying and cyberbullying policy is to provide a safe, positive learning climate for students within the schools. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the District to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying have ZERO tolerance within the SSD. Anyone who engages in bullying or cyberbullying violates the policy and shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

### **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES**

#### **Squad limits and squad selections**

Many sports teams have no squad limits; therefore, all students who meet eligibility requirements and participate in tryout activities or practice become part of the team. However, the nature of particular sports limits the number of team members who can be effectively managed by the coaching staff and/or facilities. Coaches, as the designated professionals in charge of these sports, will make student-athletes aware of the criteria for selection. The coaches will maintain records of tryout evaluations and will provide a significant opportunity to evaluate and rank student-athletes.

Students not selected for a squad may be permitted to try out for another sport during the same season as long as the selection process for that team is not completed and the head coach is agreeable to the tryout. Student-athletes must obtain approval from the coach no later than two days after receiving notification that they were not selected for the first sport they attempted to join.

#### **Uniforms and Equipment**

The District provides all uniforms and equipment necessities within the athletic budget for its student-athletes except shoes. All items remain the property of SSD. Student-Athletes will be held accountable for the uniform and equipment issued to them and are responsible for using them in compliance with instructions as provided by the coaches and the athletic training staff. Items are to be returned directly to the coach during the designated time at the end of the season. No student-athlete is permitted to try out or participate in another sport until all uniform and equipment obligations have been fulfilled from any previous season.

All unreturned items are subject to collection through the SSD business off and local magisterial procedure. Seniors with uniform or equipment obligations are subject to a delay in receiving a diploma until all items are received.

### **Team Travel**

It is expected that all student-athletes will use transportation provided by the school district to travel TO and FROM all athletic contests. There are several reasons for these procedures: safety, security, and legal liability. The school district realizes that the Athletic Director may make exceptions for extenuating circumstances. Therefore, all students wishing to ride home with only a parent or legal guardian must submit a "Transportation Release Form" request to the Athletic Director. Requests should be made no later than one day prior to the competition in which the student-athlete is requesting to travel home with their parent or legal guardian. Forms are available in the athletic office or on the Solanco School District website. Parents or guardians may assume that the request has been approved. If there are any questions or concerns, parents or legal guardians will be contacted by the athletic director.

Student-athletes who miss the bus and arrive at the contest are not permitted to participate unless the coach gave prior approval to the student-athlete, parent or guardian.

Circumstances during post-season competition may warrant overnight travel to sporting events. In that case, the school district, athletic department, and team policies & procedures are in effect. Violations of these standards will result in disciplinary action according to the appropriate student handbook and school district code of conduct.

### **Practice and competition - attendance requirements**

A student-athlete should regard their attendance at all SSD practices and competitions as a high priority. This expectation is based upon:

I. Given that the competition is exceptionally high among SSD students to be selected for a position on a team's roster or to achieve a starting role on an SSD team, students who are successful in gaining these opportunities are expected to utilize these opportunities of participation to its fullest capacity. Missing practice or competition may hinder a student-athletes individual skill, attitude, and knowledge development; weaken his/her role on the team; and affect the team's performance and chances for success.

II. PIAA by-laws base student-athletes' post-season eligibility upon attendance at his/her school's practices and competitions: Article IX, Section 5 states, "A student who participates as an individual or as a member of a team in a sport in an athletic program other than that of the student's school, who is enrolled at a school having a team in that sport, shall be ineligible to participate in the District or inter-district championship contests in that sport unless the student has been in uniform and available to participate as a member of the student's school team in that sport for at least 75% of the regular season contests...and if a student's practice in an athletic program other than that of the student's school does not meet the practice requirements of the student's school as determined by the principal, the student shall be ineligible to participate in the District or inter-district championship contests in that sport."

### **Excused Absences**

A student-athletes absence from an SSD practice or competition will be excused for the following three reasons:

1. The SSD generally approves circumstances for the absence from school (illness/injury, religious observance, educational trip, co-curricular field trip, particular academic pursuit, family commitment, or doctor's appointment).

- a. Considerations: Student-athletes should always communicate an upcoming absence as far in advance as possible to the head coach. Because of the broad scope of district activities, conflicts may occur between an athletic event and another SSD- sponsored activity. When a conflict occurs, the student-athlete and coach should work out a solution that will be in the best interest of the student-athlete by utilizing these criteria:
  - i. The relative importance of each event
    - ii. The importance of each event to the student
    - iii. The contribution the student can make to each activity
    - iv. The order in which the events were scheduled

Once the decision has been made, the student-athlete will not be penalized by the coach or sponsor of the event that was not chosen; however, playing time or starting restrictions may be considered appropriate to the situation.

2. Missing any beginning-of-the-season tryout or practice session because of family vacation only when the student-athlete provides written notice of his/her plans to the head coach at least one week before the first day of official practice/tryout. In addition, the student-athlete must attend his/her tryout sessions for teams that make cuts before the final squad selection has been made.

3. Participation in the practice, inter-school practice, scrimmage, or competition of another program in the same sport during the same season when these requirements have been met:

- The Principal, with the agreement of the head coach, waives the requirement of Article IX, section 5 because the student fails to attain the 75% attendance requirement due to illness, injury, or the student's failure to meet another PIAA eligibility rule.
- The Principal, with the agreement of the head coach, determines that practice in the athletic program other than that of the student's school meets the practice requirement of the school.

### **Consequences for unexcused absences**

Failure to follow these rules, or any additional team-specific rules publicized by the coach, will result in consequences being charged to the student-athlete. Action may include but is not limited to suspension from team activities or dismissal from the squad.

It is intended that compliance with these attendance requirements' will help each student-athlete best develop their talents and contribute to developing the strongest possible interscholastic athletic program.

### **Playing time**

The interscholastic athletics philosophy of the SSD identifies the standards for participation and playing time at each level of sports activity (SSD Board Policy No. 123).

### **Middle school/ Junior high**

At this level, student-athlete participation and development of skills in a sport are valued above winning a contest.

### **Junior varsity (JV)**

At this level, instruction and the development of individual skills for all student-athletes continue to be emphasized. However, team success in inter-school competition is also valued.

### **Varsity (VAR)**

At the varsity level, coaches are responsible for fostering individual skill development and achieving team success. To achieve this end, the most effective student-athletes, regardless of

grade level, will be given the opportunity to develop their athletic abilities and work together to establish a strong desire to attain the highest possible levels of team success.

It is the charge of each sports team's coaches solely to make determinations regarding playing time based upon their observation and evaluation of the athletes during tryouts, practices, and competitions in accord with the SSD philosophy of interscholastic athletics.

### **Multiple sports participation**

Students are encouraged to participate on as many different sports teams as possible during their school career. However, for a student to participate on more than one team per season is extraordinarily difficult and often not in the student's best interest or the team. Exceptions to this policy require approval from the athletic director.

### **"Playing up"**

There may be a circumstance in which the skill level of a student enrolled at a particular grade level of a sport and the nature of the team/sport/competition warrant the student participating on a team offered for students of a higher grade. For example, a 9th-grade wrestler participating at the varsity level comprised of 10th -12th graders. Rather than at the junior high level made up of 7th - 9th graders. Program coaches or student-athletes and their parents may initiate the process; however, PIAA by-laws and SSD athletic department protocol must be followed when an initiative is made. Coaches, parents, the student-athlete, and administrators must agree that this move is in the student's best interest and beneficial to the team/program; final approval rests with the athletic administration. This option is never available to students below the entry grade level at which a particular sport is offered. For example, an 8th grader is not eligible to participate on the girl's tennis team since it is provided to 9th -12th grade student-athletes only.

### **Injury Management**

Participation in interscholastic athletics comes with inherent risks. Unfortunately, despite attention to, instruction of, and adherence to principles of safe sports play, injuries may occur. Parents and student-athletes must acknowledge this risk.

The SSD is committed to the philosophy that proper care for injuries is critical to the students in the athletics program. The school district provides athletic trainers that are Board Certified and Pennsylvania state-licensed to provide emergency care, assessment/management of injury, and rehabilitation of athletic injuries. Additional SSD student trainers assist the head certified athletic trainer. However, given the size of the athletic program, it may not be possible to provide coverage at every scheduled event. The athletic trainer will make every effort to see that your child's sport receives attention based on the available personnel, the level of injury risk, and what events are planned for any given day. Sports labeled contact or collision sports will receive primary coverage. If a certified athletic trainer is not present, the coach in charge of the activity will assume responsibility.

### **Insurance Options**

The SSD does NOT provide free accident insurance coverage for its student-athletes. Medical expenses incurred while participating on an SSD interscholastic sports team or in SSD intramural activities may be covered through the following options:

- Privates insurance plans
- Voluntary SSD student accident insurance plan (see athletic department website)
- Pennsylvania's Children Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance Program (MAP)

### **Return to play criteria**



Following a complete physical assessment (CIPPE), the certified athletic trainers may, under the guidance of the team physician, may, at their discretion and under medical standing orders and the governing body guidelines (BOC), return a student-athlete to practice or competition. If a student-athlete is under the current care of a licensed physician, the physician must give final written documentation on the student-athletes status. No athlete will be admitted to practice or competition without proper medical documentation allowing the student-athlete back to sports. Clearance notes may only be accepted by a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Orthopedics (DO), or a physician assistant (PAC). All other documentation is not able to be accepted per the PIAA guidelines. Final return to play decisions will be made in cooperation and agreement with the athletic trainer and the team physician. If a licensed physician does not see a student-athlete following an injury, the certified athletic trainer will determine when the student-athletic returns to sport.

### **Rules for the athletic training room**

- The athletic training room is a medical facility; ACT APPROPRIATELY.
- RESPECT the athletic trainers, student trainers, other medical staff, and other athlete's in the training room.
- No swearing!
- No cleats.
- No one is allowed in the office at ANY TIME for ANY REASON.
- Please ask before using supplies or equipment. If you do not know how to use something, ASK!
- No shirt, no service!

### **Suspension from a team**

The coach of the sport, athletic director, or building administrator may make suspension decisions. Causes for suspension include but are not limited to violations of the team, athletic department, and school district rules and policies. The coach, athletic director, and building administrator will confer before such action is taken.

Suppose a student-athlete is under investigation for dismissal from a team. The coach, athletic director, or administrator may invoke a suspension until the investigation is complete as per due process procedure (see below).

### **Dismissal from a team**

Removal of a student-athlete from a team may be made by the head coach, athletic director, or building administrator for severe or repeated violations of the team, athletic department, or school district rules and policies. A meeting will take place before a decision is made. If a student-athlete is under consideration for suspension from a team, they have the right to due process.

Any student-athlete dismissed from a team will not be permitted to participate on another team during that sport's season. School board policy may further restrict a student's participation during that school year.

### **Due Process**

The athletic department has developed the following procedure to provide due process in the event a student is under consideration for suspension or dismissal from a team:

- The coach, athletic director, or administrator will notify the student-athlete and the parent/guardian of the possibility of suspension or dismissal, its proposed date/ time of effect, and the infraction that prompted the consideration of this consequence. Notifications may take place in person or by phone call.



- The student-athlete and their parent/guardian will then be allowed to reply to the charge and present evidence on their behalf.
- A conference will be held immediately or as soon as possible by mutually agreed upon by all parties.

Nothing contained in the above section denies a student or parent/guardian of their right to appeal to the superintendent, school board, or the courts or be represented by counsel at any stage.

### **Declaration of Ineligibility**

When declared ineligible for competition because of an inability to meet PIAA academic or attendance standards, a student-athlete may (with the head coach's approval) attend and participate in practices or team meetings. An ineligible student-athlete may accompany the team to competitions; however, they may not do so in uniform. When declared ineligible for practice, meeting, or competition because of inability to meet the SSD daily attendance requirement, academic standards, or conduct codes, a student-athlete may not participate in practices or team meetings, nor may he/she accompany the team to any competition.

Academic standards are as follows: Students must maintain passing grades in all classes and be on pace to graduate. A grading week is considered Monday - Saturday. Should a student-athlete have two F's on their weekly grade report, that student-athlete will be ineligible for competition during that week but will be permitted to practice. If the same student-athlete is failing two or more classes for two consecutive weekends, that student will be ineligible for practice and competition for the remainder of that week. Three consecutive weeks can result in removal from all team-related activities.

### **COACH/ ATHLETE/ PARENT Relationships**

An effective working relationship among the "athletic triangle" of coach, student-athletes, and parents benefits the quality of each person's experience. It contributes significantly to the success of the entire team. Establishing this relationship requires that each of the three individuals understands their role in the process and communicates openly and honestly with the other people involved.

To open the communication channels, the coaching staff is responsible for holding a pre-season parent meeting, at which time the following topics may be addressed:

- Introduction and background experiences of the coaching staff
- General plans for the upcoming season
- PIAA, school district, athletic department, and team philosophies, procedures, rules, and expectations as covered in handouts
- Locations and times of practices and competitions
- Helpful tips for parents/guardians can best support their child during the season
- Coach's contact information and best ways to reach out if a conflict arises
- How contact will be made should changes in practices or competition schedule

Student-athletes and their parents are responsible for asking questions to clarify their understanding of any topics discussed at the meeting and printed materials provided. Student-athletes and parents are also responsible for confirming their demographic information and contact information for the coaching staff to keep them informed.

Expectations of parent/guardian

- Support your athlete's efforts toward success

- Work to promote a positive environment that is conducive to the development of the student-athlete
- Become familiar with policies, rules and regulations in regards to the student-athlete
- Communicate any concern in a timely manner, within protocol
- Treat all coaching personnel with courtesy and respect, and insist your athlete do the same

It is anticipated that communication between all parties can quickly and respectfully be conducted throughout the season. However, the most critical time for the working relationship to be employed is when a concern or conflict arises about an expectation or comprehension of a policy/procedure.

**Topics that are accepted as appropriate for discussion are:**

- The student-athletes academic performance
- The student-athletes behavior in school with the team or in the general public as it pertains to the team's reputation
- The student-athletes role on the team
- The application of PIAA, district, athletic department, and the team philosophies, procedures, rules, and expectations for the SSD student-athletes
- Suggestions to improve a student-athlete skill acquisition, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to the sport
- Information about the recruiting process and recommendations about student-athletes suitability for play at the collegiate levels
- Management of injuries incurred by the student-athlete
- The general well-being of the student-athlete as it pertains to their role with the team

However, some topics are **NOT appropriate for discussion.** These include certain prerogatives for which the coach alone has jurisdictions within the bounds of SSD philosophies, regulations, and policies:

- Other player's roles on the team
- Selection, placement, and decisions of playing time
- Establishment and enforcement of all travel arrangements for the team
- Creation and implementation of competition strategies
- Management/ determination of all awards

During a time of conflict concerning an appropriate topic, the following procedures are to guide all parties in the attempt to solve any disputes:

- Avoid telephone/text and email discussions if possible. Request a face-to-face meeting with the other individuals so that most complete communication takes place.
- The first level (primary level) of contact should always be between the student-athlete and the coach. Discussions should be made at a time other than during a practice or competition, these can be emotional times for both parents and the coach. Speaking privately with the coach or in a place away from other teammates is preferred.
- If the problem is not resolved at the primary-level meeting, a conference that includes the coach, student-athlete, and a parent/guardian may occur (secondary level). However, none of these persons should be confronted immediately before or after a practice/competition to discuss the matter. Always set up an appointment first. If you cannot reach the coach to set up an appointment, the parent/guardian should contact the athletic office to obtain assistance in reaching the coach.

- If a resolution still is not gained after this conference, the parties should contact the athletic director on how to proceed. The athletic director will give due process (tertiary level) and consideration to all of the involved parties while attempting to bring the matter to a reasonable conclusion. SSD Policy #906 ("Public Complaints") may be initiated at this point if dissatisfaction with the athletic director's ruling occurs.

Please keep in mind that if the athletic director is contacted, the AD will ask if all previous steps have been attempted before scheduling a meeting with all parties. If they have not, the AS at that time would request that the parent/guardian contact the coach directly before this meeting would occur.

### **Student-athlete Feedback Survey**

A student-athlete feedback survey is offered after the team's competitive season. The AD will conduct the surveys during the last scheduled week of regular-season practice. The student-athletes are invited to comment ANONYMOUSLY about the following topics:

- Practice structure
- Constructive criticism from coaches
- Team improvements
- Coaches expectations
- Coaches communication
- Coaching staff behavior
- Facilities and equipment
- General overall concerns/complements

Results are analyzed by the athletic department and communicated with the administration and district school board members. All results will be discussed with the head coach at the year-end evaluation meeting and shared with all board members on the athletic -advisory committee.

Choosing to participate in a PIAA interscholastic sport is a great choice and can be one of the most rewarding experiences of a student's middle school and high school years. Since research indicates a student involved in extra-curricular activities has a great change for success during adulthood, the SSD has implemented my co-curricular programs and activities. Students can look forward to opportunities for developing their knowledge, skills, and attitude in an educationally-based athletic setting and acquiring life-long attributes and friendships.

The Solanco school district administration congratulates all students who decide to participate in interscholastic athletics and wishes the best to all students, and hopes this will be an excellent experience for you!