



Pre-season Meeting Rationale and Goals Parent/Coach Communication Guide

Parenting and coaching are both quite rewarding. Both can also be challenging at times. Parents are an integral part of our team community. With that in mind, we offer our pre-season meeting rationale, goals, and a communication guide.

Pre-season Meeting Rationale

We have pre-season meetings to provide an opportunity for coaches, student-athletes and parents to get together in an informal setting. Through such meetings, the opportunity for growth and development of the team and the student-athlete is enhanced. The meetings provide a forum for student-athletes, parents and the coaching staff to openly discuss a variety of issues, such as sportsmanship, school policy, risk of injury, and team rules and expectations. They serve to foster the dialogue that lays the groundwork for real collaboration toward a healthy and strong program.

Pre-season Meeting Goals

- Introduce athletes, their parents, and coaches to one another in a relaxed, cooperative atmosphere.
- Provide information about activities, policies, philosophy, and expectations.
- Provide information on rules of the state high school association, the middle school league, the school, and the team.
- Provide information regarding practice, game, and tournament schedules.
- Inform student-athletes and their parents of the potential risk of injury pertaining to that particular sport.
- Promote ongoing communication.
- Create awareness of ethics and sportsmanship within the program.
- Develop a bond of mutual respect, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Parent/Coach Communication Guide

As parents, you have a right to know what you are signing up for when your student-athlete decides to participate in sports. The student-athlete has the right to know what is going to be expected of him/her by the coach. The coach has a right to lay it all out in a forum that is designed for open communication.

Communication you should expect from the coach:

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for the athletes on the team
3. Locations and times for all practices and games
4. Other requirements such as fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning or off-season play
5. Disciplinary measures resulting from team rule infractions

Communication the coach should expect from parents:

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns regarding coaching philosophy and/or expectations
4. Medical conditions or physical limitations of the student-athlete

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach, the parent, and the student-athlete. These are encouraged. It is important to have a clear understanding of the situation.

Issues appropriate to discuss with the coach:

1. Treatment of your student-athlete, mentally or physically
2. Ways to help your student-athlete improve
3. Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior

Issues not appropriate to discuss with the coach:

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Student-athletes other than your own

There are times when you have to acknowledge that the coach is the coach. He/she makes judgment decisions based on what he believes to be in the best interest of the entire team. There are things that can and should be discussed with the coach, and other things that must be left to his or her discretion. If a conference is deemed necessary, the following procedure is recommended.

When you and your student-athlete have concerns to discuss with the coach:

1. Call or email the coach to set up a meeting
2. If unable to reach the coach, call the athletic department. The staff will help set up a meeting for you.
3. Please DO NOT confront a coach before or after a game or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature rarely promote positive resolution.

If resolution is not satisfactory to the parent or coach:

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director
2. At this meeting, every effort will be made to resolve the issue.
3. If the issue is not resolved at the meeting with the Athletic Director, then and only then shall school administration become involved.

Research has shown that students involved in sports and other extra-curricular activities fair much better in school, and develop a lifelong pattern for success. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant in sports are exactly those that will promote success in school and beyond.

Tips for Being a Supportive Parent

Being a parent of a CDS student-athlete can be an exciting, memorable time in your life. We can think of very few other ways in which to share your teenager's middle and high school years that are as potentially fun and fulfilling.

To help make your participation most rewarding, the following thoughts have been collected from several sources and are offered to you.

1. **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD.** This phase in your child's life can be difficult. There will be days he/she is on top of the world, and other days he/she will be as low as it goes.
2. **BE POSITIVE.** Being on a competitive team is really quite an accomplishment. Do not let playing time dictate the athlete's happiness. Celebrate the fact your student-athlete is good enough to make the team.
3. **BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE COACHING STAFF IN FRONT OF YOUR CHILD.** Nothing can erode the intricate fabric of teamwork faster than athletes doubting the capabilities of their coaches. It can affect performance, confidence, and the edge needed to compete. Many times teams are so evenly matched, this lack of respect leads to defeat. No one is born a coach. It takes years to develop all the technical, psychological and social skills necessary in the profession. You may not realize that the "administration" of all duties a head coach must perform can easily be more time consuming than the actual "on the field" coaching. If you have concerns, see the coach. He or she will listen, appreciate your confidentiality and give you a timely response.

4. **BE PART OF THE PARENT NETWORK.** Whether or not you are a part of the Booster Club, very special relationships can be fostered over the careers of our athletes by socializing with other parents. This socialization can take place at games, after games, at team dinners, etc. Parents need support, too. Be positive with each other and do not hesitate to remind each other about remaining positive at all times. If you hear a “rumor” that concerns you about any athletic issues, call the coach or athletic director to verify or clarify what you have heard. Do not perpetuate a rumor by passing it on or by remaining silent about an issue that could affect the program.
5. **BOOSTER PARENTS.** Donate to help make the experience for every athlete the best it can possible be. The support we receive is extremely welcome in providing our athletes with much appreciated equipment, uniforms, and supplies. Booster Clubs make a difference, but the spirit should be focused on the total program.
6. **WINNING AND LOSING.** To say winning and losing is not important is not true. If it were not, we would not keep score. The higher the skill level of play each athlete achieves, the greater the emphasis will be on being competitive. We understand, and we are fortunate to have a competitive program focused on building a winning tradition. Our children can be proud of their accomplishments. Preparing for competition is the athlete’s ultimate goal. At CDS we know preparing for competition carries benefits far beyond the physical, into the emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well. There will be times when things may not be going well for your child or your child’s team. This is when parents need to be most supportive. If we strive to keep our priorities as a program in order, success will take care of itself.
7. **SPORTSMANSHIP.** It ought to be natural behavior, but it is not. We need to constantly reemphasize the virtues of fairness, honor, being a good loser, and being a gracious winner. Most importantly, we are a **School of Character**. We are not merely representing ourselves. We are representing our school community. It is important to be who we say we are. Here are some things you can do to help:
 - Let the coach do the coaching and support him.
 - Congratulate all of the players on both teams, regardless of the outcome.
 - Do not antagonize the fans of the other school. They are our guests for home games and we are their guests while we are at away games.
 - Do not boo, jeer, or ridicule the other team, or the officials.
 - Do not make excuses to your child or blame others for a loss or poor performance.
8. **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS.** Having lofty expectations for our children is a normal, healthy, challenging goal. In striving to meet these expectations, we must also be realistic. Not everyone can receive a college scholarship. Our coaches will work with individuals and parents to help find opportunities for those who wish to pursue collegiate careers. However, they will not recommend a school at which the athlete cannot potentially be successful. Let the coach know if you have special needs for assistance. If they have the knowledge, they will try to find a school to accommodate those needs and fit the profile for your child. Nevertheless, remember, not everyone can receive a college scholarship.

These years will go quickly. Do everything you can to make them an enjoyable experience that all (the parents, the child, and the school) can learn from and share in.

Go Patriots!

