

Pulaski Academy and Central School

Athletic Handbook

2024-25

Home Of The



Blue Devils



Dear Student-Athlete, Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the Pulaski Academy and Central School District Interscholastic Athletic Program. Congratulations! The choice that you made to join the Blue Devil athletic family is an excellent one.

This handbook is for athletes and their parents/guardians to be used as a resource that provides the expectations and information needed to promote an excellent and successful athletic program.

The Pulaski Philosophy: Athletics are an integral part of the total education process at Pulaski Academy and Central School. Athletics will provide opportunities for students to participate in a comprehensive and competitive interscholastic program, in partnership with parents/community and staff.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege, which supports the academic mission of the Pulaski Academy and Central School District. The primary goal of the Pulaski Academy and Central School District interscholastic athletic program is to provide high quality experiences that are fun and that promote individual growth within a safe and healthy environment. We encourage all students to participate in some phase of our program and create memories that will last a lifetime.

When your daughter/son chooses to participate in Pulaski's sports program, we feel that they have committed themselves to certain responsibilities and obligations. This handbook will acquaint you with some of the specific policies/rules that are necessary for a well-organized interscholastic athletic program. Our program is governed by State regulations and the code for extracurricular activities established by the Commissioner of Education.

Please contact Athletic Director Steve Komaneky with any questions/concerns regarding the Pulaski Academy and Central School District Athletic Program and/or this handbook at:

315-298-5103

We look forward to working with your sons and daughters through the Pulaski Interscholastic Athletic Program(s).

Sincerely,
PACS Athletics

PACS Interscholastic Sports Programs

Football	Varsity, Modified
Boys and Girls Soccer	Varsity, Modified
Boys and Girls Cross Country	Varsity, Modified
Boys and Girls Basketball	Varsity, JV, Modified
Swimming	Varsity, Modified
Wrestling	Varsity, Modified (combined with APW @ Pulaski)
Hockey	Varsity (“Ontario Bay Hockey”)
Boys and Girls Indoor Track & Field	Varsity
Baseball	Varsity, Modified
Boys and Girls Outdoor Track & Field	Varsity, Modified
Boys and Girls Tennis	Varsity
Boys Golf	Varsity
Softball	Varsity, Modified

Athletic Program Philosophy

Modified

This level of play is primarily for 7th, 8th, and when appropriate, 9th grade students. The size of the team shall be determined by the athletic director and coach.

The purposes of the Modified programs are to have:

- Sportsmanship promoted as a primary goal of the athletic experience. At PACS, we will demonstrate respect for all coaches and fellow players at all times.
- Coaches teaching the fundamentals of the sport, and the athlete learning the game and its rules.
- Participation being promoted, with all athletes expecting playing time. Playing time may not necessarily be equal for all.
- The experience of competing and exploration of the sport being more important at this level than winning the contest.

Junior Varsity

This level of play is primarily for 9th and 10th grade students. The size of the team shall be determined by the athletic director and coach.

The purpose of the JV programs is to have:

- Sportsmanship promoted as a primary goal of the program. At PACS, we will demonstrate respect for all coaches and fellow players at all times.
- An emphasis on individual and team development.
- Participation based on an increase in skill development and competition for playing time. While adequate playing time for all is the goal, team members may not receive equal playing time.
- An increased emphasis on winning the contest.
- Preparation of the athlete and the team for the varsity level.

Varsity

This level of play is primarily for 11th and 12th grade students. For those sports that do not have JV level teams; the Varsity level may consist primarily of 9th-12th grade students. The size of the team shall be determined by the athletic director and coach.

The purpose of the Varsity programs is to have:

- Sportsmanship displayed at all times. At PACS, we will demonstrate respect for all coaches and fellow players at all times.
- Playing time is earned, not guaranteed based on skill acquisition and knowledge of the sport. Play time may also be impacted based on game situations and the discretion of the coach.
- Winning as a primary goal.
- Athletes showing a commitment to the team and teamwork are expected from varsity athletes. These athletes serve as role models for younger athletes.

Code of Ethics

Visiting team members, students, and adult spectators are guests to be afforded all the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered and well-intentional host would normally give. The visitors, in turn, are to act as invited guests, using the home school's facilities with care and respect. Officials are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretation should be accepted.

Spectators, student-athletes, and coaches must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their positive actions can relate directly to the success of their teams. This includes the student cheering section – the “Devils Den.”

Remember that an athletic contest is only a game. Players, coaches, schools, officials, fans, and communities should view athletic contests as a laboratory for life experiences that do not include unsportsmanlike behaviors. Decisions of coaches and officials should not be taken personally.

Student Athlete Code of Ethics

- Emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
- Use social media in a positive and appropriate manner.
- Follow school rules and regulations.
- Eliminate all possibilities which tend to destroy the best values of the game.
- Stress the values derived from playing the game fairly.
- Show courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
- Establish positive relationships between visitors and hosts.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
- Achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
- Encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgment by players on the team.
- Recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional wellbeing of the individual players.
- Remember that an athletic contest is only a game not a matter of life and death for the player, coach, school, fan, community, state, or nation.

Coaching Code of Ethics

- Exemplify the highest moral character as a role model for young people.
- Recognize coaching as teaching in its truest form.
- Recognize the individual worth and reinforce the self-image of each team member.
- Encourage and assist team members to achieve their highest academic potential.
- Create a set of training rules for athletes that reflect positive values of abstaining from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and any other destructive behavior.
- Strive to develop the qualities of leadership, initiative, and good judgment in each team member.
- Promote positive use of Social Media.
- Communicate and interpret program goals and objectives to parents and community.
- Provide a safe environment for practice and competition.

- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game official.
- Teach and abide by the rules of the game in letter and spirit.
- Build and maintain ethical relationships with coaches, administrators, and teachers.
- Strive for excellence in coaching skills and techniques through professional development.
- Promote personal fitness and good nutrition.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Encourage a healthy respect for the overall athletic program and its vital role in education.

Spectator Code of Ethics

The Athletic Department recognizes the role of interscholastic athletics in defining ethical behavior and developing personal character of our students. Therefore, we ask that all spectators to:

- Refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other prohibited substances on school grounds.
- Demonstrate a high degree of sportsmanship by modeling appropriate behavior.
- Make only positive comments and by using appropriate language at the event and/or on social media.
- Show positive respect for the judgment of coaches, referees, and officials.
- Acknowledge that fields, courts, bench areas, and equipment are the players' domain during a contest.
- Monitor the safety of children at all times.

Should anyone in attendance at a school-sponsored event violate these behavioral expectations, the individual will be subject to disciplinary action, including removal from one or more extracurricular events.

II. Eligibility

Before a student can participate in PACS Athletics, she/he must:

1. Using Family ID:
 1. Register and sign up for a sport within 30 days of that season's start
 2. Complete the required personal information and Health History on Family ID
 3. Upload or drop off to the nurse an updated physical form
 4. Complete requested consent forms (Self Carry Medication Form) if necessary
 5. Registration must be approved by the Nurse prior to the athlete participating in practice.
2. Attend preseason meeting
3. Attend the state required minimum amount of practices before the first contest.

Transfer Students must contact the Athletic Office to fill out the Transfer Request form in order to receive clearance before participating on any JV/Varsity athletic teams. Then follow steps 1-3 from above.

N.Y.S.P.H.A.A. Student Eligibility by Grade/Age (P.A.C.S)

- A pupil shall be eligible for senior high school athletic competition in a sport during each of four consecutive seasons of such sport beginning with the pupil's entry into the ninth grade.

- At times 8th grade students are allowed to play in senior high school athletic competition. Such pupils shall be eligible for competition during five, or six, consecutive seasons of a sport beginning with the pupil's entry into the 8th grade.
- A student shall be eligible for interschool athletic competition in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 until his/her 19th birthday. If the age of nineteen years is reached on or after July 1 the student may continue to participate during that school year in all sports.

Athletic Placement Process for Interschool Athletic Programs (APP)

Varsity Coach ONLY may recommend a student athlete for this process. The APP is the method for evaluating students who want to participate in sports at higher or lower levels, consistent with their physical and emotional maturity, size, fitness level, and skills. The APP program is designed for mature and exceptionally skilled students to advance to an upper level. It is not designed to fill positions on teams, provide additional experience, provide a place for junior high students when no modified program is offered, or as a reward for students.

****A student will not be allowed to tryout, practice or play at the JV or Varsity level without final approval.**

8th grade student APP requirements:

- Parent permission letter authorizing athletic advancement
- Completion of Tanner maturity test by physician
- Completion of the Coach's Sport Skill Evaluation including the expected percentage of playing time.
- Completion of APP physical fitness assessment under supervision of Athletic Director or designated physical education teacher
- Complete appropriate paperwork for participation in PACS athletics

In addition to the above requirements 7th grade students must also complete the following:

Deadlines: Please note that the completed file must be compiled and submitted to the Superintendent for review and consideration no later than the following dates:

- **Fall Sport - July 1st of the year the student athlete wishes to be considered**
- **Winter Sport - October 1st of the year the student athlete wishes to be considered**
- **Spring Sport - February 1st of the year the student athlete wishes to be considered**

The District recognizes a difference in the social, emotional, and physical characteristics between seventh grade student-athletes when compared to eighth grade student-athletes.

****In addition to the aforementioned guidelines (relating to eighth grade student-athletes), the following are also required for seventh grade student-athletes to apply for APP (Athletic Placement Process).**

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete and his or her parents/guardians to:

- Compile information and recommendations
- Present information to the Athletic Director for review
- Contact District Office to schedule presentation with the Board of Education prior to the start of the athletic season for which eligibility is sought
- The Athletic Director will present information to the Board of Education and the Superintendent for review and final approval

Foreign Exchange Students

All Foreign Exchange Students must be reported to the section office using the appropriate form. Foreign Exchange student may be immediately eligible the first year in residence and be limited to one-year eligibility provided the student is

- A participant in an established foreign exchange program accepted for listing by the Council of Standards for International Travel (CSIET)
- Complies with all State Education Department and NYSPHSAA, Inc. standards.

Mixed Competition

New York State provides for students involved in mixed competition to be placed on teams at appropriate levels of competition based upon the individual's medical history, maturity, physical data, fitness scores and skills. The guidelines are to be used for both junior high school and senior high school programs.

III. Athlete Expectations and Responsibilities

Athletic Daily Eligibility Rules

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Pulaski Academy is a privilege for the athlete. A positive attitude, appropriate conduct, and regular attendance are essential. Scheduled practices and contests are mandatory unless excused and may change due to weather or unforeseen conflicts. Some student-athletes will not be able to obtain all "A's" in their class work, however it is possible for the student to present a positive attitude at all times, attend classes regularly, and fulfill academic responsibilities.

- Disciplinary absences-students who are assigned 3-5PM detention, ISS (for 2+ periods), or OSS on a given day cannot participate in sports practices and/or competitions on that day.
- Unexcused tardy-students who arrive to school unexcused after 8:00AM cannot participate in sports practices and/or competitions on that day.
- School absence-student athletes who are absent from school, may not participate in sports practices and/or competitions on the same day
- Illness-student athletes who leave school as a result of illness and do not return before the end of the school day cannot participate in sports practices or competitions on that day.
- Skipped practice/competition-student athletes who miss practice or competition may be kept out of a practice or game based on their coach's discretion
- Physical Education-student athletes who do not participate in physical education class, cannot participate in athletic practices or competitions on that day.

- All student athletes are expected to maintain positive and appropriate behaviors in relation to school attendance, tardiness, citizenship, conduct, and academics. If there are regular problems relating to these areas that may require the removal of a student from a sport, a conference will be held with the student, parent, coach, and athletic director to determine how to proceed.

Substance Use

The possession and/or use of performance enhancing or illegal substances, drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco products (including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, pipes, vape pipes and e-cigarettes) is detrimental to the health, wellness, and performance of student athletes, and is prohibited. Any coach or school official that suspects an athlete of violating the rules is required to report their concerns directly to the Athletic Director.

If a student has been found to have used or been in possession of banned substances in school, the student will be:

- Referred to a school counselor for an intervention plan.
- Disciplined according to the Code of Conduct
- Removed from practices and competitions for at least 30 school days as determined by the coach and athletic director. The suspension will continue into the following sports season. (ie. If there are 5 days left of a season the student will miss the last 5 days of the season plus 25 days of the next season)

If a student has been found to have used or been in possession of banned substances outside of school, the student will be:

- Referred to a school counselor for an intervention plan.
- Removed from competitions for at least 30 athletic calendar days as determined by the coach and athletic director. The suspension will continue into the following sports season. (ie. If there are 5 days left of a season the student will miss the last 5 days of the season plus 25 days of the next season). Practices will be modified and mandatory.

Additionally, if a student hosts or remains present at events, activities or locations where alcohol, illegal drugs, or other performance enhancing drugs are present, used, or illegally distributed, that student is subject to the consequences and procedures outlined in both the Athletic Handbook, and the School Code of Conduct as determined by Pulaski School District Administration.

Reinstatement Criteria

The duration of an athletic suspension may be reduced by up to half its length. This must be requested in writing by the student athlete and athlete's parent to the Athletic Director. The student athlete will complete community service hours under the supervision of the Athletic Director.

A second similar infraction will result in suspension at discretion of the Athletic Director.

Appeal Procedure

Any student/parent that wishes to appeal an athletic suspension must do so in writing within 48 hours of the start of the decision. The appeal will be heard by the Principal and/or the Superintendent if necessary. A decision on the appeal will be made within 24 hours after hearing the appeal and reviewing all pertinent information. The student and parent(s) will be notified in writing of the decision(s).

Quitting Scholastic Sports

All teams need a full squad for practice and for the development of future teams; therefore, athletes are to be committed to a team for the full season. An athlete that wishes to quit a team should:

- Personally notify the coach of the team within 48 hours or two school days after the last attended practice.
- Return all school uniforms and equipment within one week.

Student athletes who quit a sport are ineligible to participate in the next sports season unless/until meeting with the Athletic Director.

Returning of Student Uniforms

Failure to turn in a sports' uniform / equipment which has been issued, at the end of a sport's season, will result in:

- Foregoing any recognitions, scholarships, athletic awards or pins
- Inability to try-out/participate in the next sport's season
- Being charged for the cost of uniform and equipment if not returned. The school district will notify the parent of charges owed.
- Additional consequences may be applied as per Code of Conduct for theft of public school equipment.

IV. Coaching Expectations

Supervision

Coaches are expected to supervise their players at all times during practices, games, and while on school transportation to ensure the safety and proper behavior of PACS athletes.

Practices

- Practices may be held Monday through Saturday. There will be no Sunday practices unless explicit permission has been given from the building principal and/or athletic director.
- There will be no "optional practices." A practice is either mandatory or there is no practice at all.

Player Evaluations and Cut Procedures

It is an unfortunate fact that in certain situations, athletes must be cut from athletic teams. It would be ideal to keep all who try out and guarantee everyone playing time, but in some sports that is impossible. The decision to cut is based on the following criteria:

- The sport is such that only a limited number of athletes can be assured playing time.
- The individual's potential for future growth.

- Keeping certain athletes with limited skills may not be good for the athlete or the team.
- Safety.
- Severe violations of school rules and regulations.

PACS coaches use the following procedures when evaluating student athletes:

1. The team is told before the first practice how many try-out practices will be held before cuts are made – usually a minimum of three practice sessions – and student-athletes will be informed about how they will be evaluated.
2. An objective list of criteria is established by the individual coach for the sport and is used to evaluate the student athletes over the try out period. This is reviewed by the Athletic Director.
3. Coaches evaluate sports specific skills and criteria based on level of play (modified / JV / Varsity).
4. Players are chosen objectively based on indicated criteria.
5. Coaches must consult with the Athletic Director with regard to athletes' evaluations and determinations with regard to cuts and / or accurate player placement on athletic teams.
6. In the event cuts must occur, the coaches (JV & Varsity for varsity sports; Modified for grades 7 & 8) will talk to each athlete individually with regard to player evaluation. Athletes will be notified if they made the team. Coaches will review the criteria they used to evaluate the athlete. **This conversation should occur with at least two coaches present with the athlete.**
7. When an athlete gets cut from a sport, they may join another sports team that has not settled on a final roster. Practices from the initial sport will be counted toward the second sport. **The Athletic Director will check and approve all cut procedures for each sport and each level of athletic competition.**

Playing Time Philosophy

An often controversial issue in athletics is the amount of time that each athlete is allowed to participate. Not all athletes possess the same skills, desire, and potential for success. Many factors determine the amount of playing time that an athlete gets during games. Some factors include (but are not limited to):

- Skills as demonstrated in practice.
- Understanding of concepts, rules and strategies as demonstrated in practice.
- Practice attendance.
- Effort during practice.
- Attitude as demonstrated in practice, games, and on social media.
- Physical condition.
- The quality of other players at that position.
- The ability to contribute to team success.
- Game situations: i.e. score of the game and the time remaining.
- Playing time is determined at the discretion of the coach based on the previous factors.

Communication Guidelines for Student-Athletes/Parents/Coaches

Communication to be Expected from the Coach:

- Philosophy of the coach and the program.

- Expectations the coach has for your child and the team.
- Locations of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, i.e. special equipment.
- Disciplinary action(s) that may result in the denial of your child's participation.
- All coaches will communicate with student-athletes and families via ParentSquare.

Communication of Appropriate Concerns to Discuss Between Coaches and Parents:

Typically, concerns should be expressed directly to the coach, after the student-athlete has talked with the coach. However, there are times where you may need to discuss:

- The treatment of an athlete, mentally and physically.
- Ways to help an athlete improve in attitude, skill, conditioning, etc., possibly leading to an increase in playing time.
- Concerns about athlete's behavior.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts.
- Specific concern in regards to a coach's criteria and/or expectations.

As your child becomes more involved in programs at Pulaski Academy, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when a student-athletes athletic experience is not as hoped. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

Procedures to Follow to Discuss a Concern with a Coach

- Student-athlete should contact the coach *first* in an attempt to resolve the situation.
- If resolution is not reached, the parent should contact the coach to set up an appointment to discuss a concern. Please wait at least 24 hours after a contest before contacting the coach. Please do not attempt to meet with a coach before or after a practice or contest.
- If the coach cannot be reached within 24 hours of making contact, call the Athletic Office at 315-298-5103 option 5 to assist in arranging a meeting.
- If after speaking with the coach, the issue is still not resolved, call to set up an appointment with the Athletic Director.

Parent Transportation

Students are expected to ride the bus to and from all athletic events unless there are extenuating circumstances. In those cases:

- Permission must be received by the coach from a parent either verbally or in writing to drive their child home and the parent should sign-out their child. For an athlete to ride home with another adult, the parents must sign the parent permission form. The form must then be turned into the High School Athletic Office during regular school hours prior to the practice/contest. The Athletic Director will then approve or disapprove of the request.
- Under extenuating circumstances, students may receive special permission to drive to an event. A written parental request must be made to, and approved by, the Athletic Director or Principal during regular office hours.

Vacation Attendance Policy

Modified Sports

- No modified games or scrimmages will be scheduled over school vacations. Any practices held will be voluntary and the student will not be penalized in any way for missing voluntary practices.

JV and Varsity Sports

- In many cases, it is necessary to schedule games, scrimmages, and practices during vacation periods. Students who go away on family obligations and miss practice and/or scrimmages/games will not be penalized. Athletes must let their coach(es) know as early as possible if they are going away. It should be understood that a student who misses valuable practice time during vacations may not be prepared for games upon his/her return and therefore playing time may be adjusted.

End of Season Expectations:

- Coaches are responsible for collecting uniforms at the end of the last athletic competition (Away and Home competitions) immediately following the game.

V. HONORS

Signing Ceremony

Pulaski athletes that have signed documentation with their prospective college coach to participate on a non-intramural sports team, regardless of division, in college will be recognized at our end of the year signing ceremony.

Athletic Award System

- **Certificates** – All participants will receive a certificate
- **Small Letter “P”** – Awarded to first time letter winners in a JV sport.
- **Large Letter “P”** – Awarded to first time letter winners in a Varsity sport.
- **Pins** – Given to all Varsity letter winners every time they letter.
- **Bars** – Given to all JV letter winners every time they letter.
- **Pin** – Awarded to Captains of a Varsity sport.
- **Manager Pins**-Awarded to students that assist the varsity team

Scholar Athlete Teams

Since the inception of the “Scholar Athlete Team” in the early 1990’s by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), Pulaski has had 14 teams earn the **State Scholar Athlete Champion** title – more than any other school in Section 3. This recognition is awarded to the athletic team with the highest academic average for that sport in New York State.

Varsity Sports Teams that wish to be considered for the “Scholar Athlete Team” must have a minimum team average of 90% or higher for that season. 75% of the team must have a 90% (or higher) team average in order to qualify. Individual “PINS” will be rewarded to athletes that earn a 90% or higher average for that season.

Scholar Athlete Teams will receive a team certificate.

VI. **Other Information**

Booster Club

The Booster Club maintains a concession stand at most athletic events for the fall, winter, and spring seasons. The Booster Club is always looking for parent volunteers to help run the concession stand at sporting events. If interested, please stop by any concession stand and sign up to volunteer. It is a great way to get involved and make your children's experience at Pulaski Academy more memorable.

Athletic Forms

- Student Athlete Transportation Form

These forms can be downloaded from the PACS website – www.pulaskicsd.org under Office & Departments, Athletics.

Athletic Schedules

Schedules can be found by accessing Schedule Galaxy through the PACS Website at www.pulaskicsd.org Click on “Athletics” and then “Athletic Schedules” for sports contests and schedules.

NCAA Eligibility

To learn more about the NCAA Student-Athlete Eligibility Center, please visit www.ncaastudent.org. Student-Athletes who would like to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse can visit www.ncaa.org.

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Evans, Guidance Counselor, 298-5103, ext. 5004.