



## College Park Athletics Parent Guidelines

There is one thing we all have in common here: We all care very deeply about a student/athlete who is participating on a College Park Athletic Team. We know you want your child to have a positive athletic experience this year...and beyond. We know you want your child to be successful. We would like to help you make your child's experience at College Park a good one and to help you and your child succeed.

Parents, never underestimate how important you are in the life of your child. Most of you have gone to great lengths in time, energy and money to help your child be successful in the classroom and on the athletic field. We know that without you and without your support, your child would not be the person they are today. As coaches, teachers, and fellow parents we appreciate you more than you know.

We hope to pass on information that will enrich your child's experience and help avoid some of the problems which have occurred in the lives of many. We have seen good things...and some very bad things...that parents have done with their children. The interesting thing is that in almost every case, the parent has meant well. When it comes to helping our children succeed on the athletic field, meaning well does not always get the results that we are hoping for. In fact, the opposite frequently happens. We all want our children to succeed...and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. The problem lies in the way we often times go about trying to make this happen.

The most important thing to know is that every athlete needs to enjoy their sport. If they are not enjoying their experience, they will not improve as quickly, and may even quit. This can happen regardless of the child's talent and success. We (both parents and coaches) must be careful not to be overly concerned with success in terms of wins and losses. If we are, the athlete's enjoyment of the sport will drop significantly. This is especially true for the early period of their athletic development. Remember, the greater the enjoyment, the more improvement the child will experience. We should never be responsible for taking the fun out of sports for our children.

We need to understand that just because an athlete wins does not necessarily mean they are a good athlete. A good athlete is one who is in the process of mastering their sport...in all facets of the game. With this approach we should see consistent improvement. Your child's training here at College Park is designed to help them master the art of their chosen sport-NOT just to win today. This is a process...and it takes time. If your child can simply keep getting better, winning will take care of itself.

The most important thing to understand as a parent of a student/athlete is what your role should be. You are your child's support system. This means that your role (job) is to help your child make good choices and assist them in athletics, school and life. This role is critical and no one else can fill it other than you.

What you should never try to be, is your child's coach! This is the biggest mistake that we as parents make, trying to coach our children, rather than simply supporting and encouraging them. Your support role is vital. Your child does not want to be...nor should they be...coached 24 hours a day. Practices and competitions are hard enough. When your child leaves the athletic field, they need to be energized and encouraged. They should never be criticized, coached, or given a "clinic" or "trained some more" because you think they should have done better or should be doing more. That is the role of the coach.

What can we as parents (now aka our child's support system) do to help?

1. Be positive. Encourage your child. Do not criticize their performance. Praise good efforts in victory and defeat. Enforce positive points in the game. Praise improvement. If you see something negative in their performance, keep it to yourself. Never yell at your child after a game or practice. This only hurts...especially later on as the negative effects are often delayed. You and your home are an oasis...a place for your child to go for refreshment. High school sports are tough enough. Your child needs someplace to go where everything is OK.
2. Don't force a conversation about sports unless your child initiates it...especially after a tough loss or poor performance. Don't fret over their silence. Your child will most likely talk at some point, usually if you are consistently complimentary, encouraging and positive. If they do choose to talk, let your child do the majority of the talking. Show your child that you care and are listening.
3. The exception to this rule may be in the area of poor sportsmanship or other inappropriate actions. This includes disrespectful actions or attitudes toward opponents, teammates, officials or coaches. In these cases remind your child firmly that this not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the future. One way to approach is to say: "I understand that you hate to lose. Hating to lose is a good quality, but showing with poor sportsmanship is a sign of weakness. No one should ever see this behavior again."
4. Be supportive of the coaching staff. Whether you agree with the coaches or not, you should never communicate to your child or others a difference of opinion. Do not make negative comments about the coaches personally or their ability to coach. It will accomplish nothing positive and will undoubtedly adversely affect your child's attitude and effort in the future. If there is a disagreement or problem, discuss this with the coach/coaching staff privately. These things can get "contagious" among adults and often get blown out of proportion. Help the team by supporting their efforts...not tearing things down.
5. Do not criticize or "talk down" other members of the team. Your child will learn sportsmanship and leadership (good or bad) from you. The best leaders consistently come from positive parents.
6. "Honor the game" and avoid embarrassing your child. You can do this by being respectful toward officials and opposing coaches and players. Focus on cheering for our team...not against the other team.
7. Make good nutrition a family thing, not just for the athlete. Provide a good environment for sleep. Get your child to bed for proper rest and recovery.
8. Be sure to provide a good environment for academic work at home. **DEMAND GOOD ACADEMICS.**
9. Don't be a fan of other athletes or teams. Your child does not want to hear how good someone else is. Be a fan of your child and their team.
10. Get involved with the College Park Boosters Club.
11. Be sure your child has clean workout gear every day, and uses the shower ASAP after games and practices.
12. Make sure your child gets to practices and games EARLY! Make sure that they take care of the details of their life that must be completed...ie homework, school, projects, chores, and family commitments.
13. Remind yourself that this is your child's High School experience...not yours. This is their thing.



## College Park Athletics Parent Pledge

Please read, initial each item, sign and return to the coach or appropriate official.

1. I pledge to get my child to practice and games on time. I understand that I may be putting my child at risk by not providing adequate time for warm up. I will be on time to pick my child up from all games and practices. This shows respect for the program, and tells my child that he or she is my top priority. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I pledge to use positively encourage my child. I understand that fewer than 1% of High School athletes receive college scholarships and that the top three reasons kids play sports are to have fun, make new friends, and learn new skills. I understand that the sport is for the participants and I will keep things in proper perspective. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I pledge to "honor the game". I understand the importance of setting a good example for my child. I will show respect for all involved in the game including coaches, players, opponents, opposing fans, and officials. I understand that officials make mistakes. If the official makes a "bad call" I will honor the game and be silent! \_\_\_\_\_
4. I pledge to refrain from yelling instructions to my child. I understand that this is the coach's job. I understand that games are chaotic times for children trying to deal with fast-paced action and respond to opponents, teammates and coaches. I will limit my game time comments to encouraging my child and other players. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I pledge to refrain from making negative comments about my child's coach or team in my child's presence. I understand this plants a negative seed in my child's head that can negatively influence my child's motivation and overall experience.
6. If I have a disagreement or problem with the program, I pledge discuss this with the coach/coaching staff privately first. Often these issues occur due to lack of communication. \_\_\_\_\_

I will honor this College Park Athletic Pledge in my words and actions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print student/athletes name