

Enhancing Parent Relationships

In order to maintain parental support and a sense of involvement in and commitment to an athletic program, parents must be made aware of channels for communication for a variety of purposes. Communication mechanisms for parents should include:

1) General Season Information

- a) Starting date, location, time
- b) Health exams
- c) Insurance requirements/procedures
- d) Philosophy orientation and policy or rule book familiarization
- e) Warning statements
- f) Equipment furnished and the student's responsibility
- g) An invitation to attend practice, learn about season goals and various drills, etc.
- h) Methods and times for communication with coaches
- i) Orientation meeting date/time

2) Season Contest Information

- a) Home and away dates and times
- b) Tournaments
- c) TV or radio coverage
- d) Ticket information
- e) Special parent/booster club/alumni trips
- f) Parent buttons, hats and other spirit items
- g) Practice schedule
- h) Trips to opponent schools
- i) Car pool information

3) Pre-Season Clinic - a season opening clinic is useful to demonstrate required playing techniques, practice organization, athletic trainer services, protective equipment and nutrition advice.

4) Pre-Season Correspondence

- a) Midseason letter citing reasons for success, challenges and difficulties and the need for continued support.
- b) Special parents' day/night contests and related social activity

5) Post-Season Correspondence

- a) Tournament information
- b) Banquet(s) and/or award programs

6) Out-Of-Season Correspondence

- a) Cite the need for strong student academic efforts and support
- b) Remind parents of stressful exam periods and the need for support
- c) Cite the need for off-season conditioning, diet and rest
- d) Cite various instructional camps or competitive opportunities sanctioned by the state association

7) Developing Parent Assistance Networks

- a) General support group (booster club) involvement
- b) Specific projects, e.g., weight room, video recorder/monitor, and special equipment
- c) Develop parent communication and support networks to help organize substance-free social activities
- d) Cost-saving mechanisms (use of parent ticket-sellers and ticket-takers, announcers, parking attendants)

8) Taking an Advocate Position for Athletes

- a) Ensure that coaches are certified or undertaking appropriate in-service training.
- b) Ensure that coaches are certified in first aid or CPR.

- c) Develop programs to prevent or intervene in chemical substance abuse among athletes
- d) Encourage and support the hiring of a certified trainer
- e) Demonstrate efforts to improve and renovate facilities
- f) Demonstrate efforts to acquire state-of-the-art equipment
- g) Encourage and support the hiring of a certified conditioning specialist
- h) Send a personal letter of invitation to each incoming freshmen

e. Dealing with Parent Concerns

- 1) Provide parents with data concerning player performance
 - a) Criteria used to select team members
 - b) Continued assessment of team practices and contest performances of all team candidates or members
 - c) Evidence of improper execution or techniques
 - d) Evidence of mental mistakes
 - e) Evidence of attitudinal problems (complaints, inadequate effort, attention to coaching and dedication to detail or commitment to team goals)
- 2) Define procedures for contacting the coaching staff and procedures for discussion various sport-specific questions.
- 3) Identify procedures for expressing concerns or complaints
- 4) Define appeal procedures
- 5) Implement a telephone "hot line" that parents can use to call in concerns or issues.
It is suggested an answering machine be used to screen calls. Inform parents that action will be taken when names and phone numbers are reported along with issues or concerns