

ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULAR



UNION SPRINGS
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Home of the Wolves

HANDBOOK
2024-25



Mission Statement

The mission of the Union Springs Interscholastic athletic program and extracurricular activities is consistent with the mission of the school district and is designed to foster excellence and achievement through educational and competitive experiences while stressing sportsmanship and safety. Participation in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities at Union Springs will develop individual and team potential through the promotion of community, character, civility and citizenship.

Community

Athletics and extracurricular activities should be a broadening experience in which harmony of mind and body functions are created through striving for physical and mental excellence. A well-coordinated program is vitally important to the morale of the school and the community.

Character

Our students will demonstrate responsibility, accountability, dedication, trustworthiness, and discipline.

Civility

Our students will demonstrate civility toward others by showing respect, a sense of fair play, and a caring attitude.

Citizenship

Our students will demonstrate loyalty, commitment, and good citizenship.

- The Union Springs Athletic Program will adhere to all policies and procedures of the New York State Public School Athletic Association as well as the Constitution and by-laws of the Interscholastic Athletic Conference.
- It is the policy at Union Springs Central School that all students participating in extracurricular activities are required to abide by the same eligibility guidelines and disciplinary regulations as students participating in athletics.

Modified Program Philosophy

This program is available to all students in the seventh and eighth grade (sometimes ninth grade depending on the sport). At this level, the focus is on participation, learning athletic skills, game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth, physiologically appropriate demands on the adolescent body, and healthy competition.

Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the coach and the athletic coordinator based on the availability of:

1. Qualified coaches.
2. Safe and suitable indoor and outdoor facilities.
3. Financial resources.

In order for the desired development of the adolescent athlete and team to occur, practice sessions are vital. The New York State Public High School Athletic Association publishes regulations by which practice sessions are governed. Practices or contests may be scheduled for Saturdays and vacations.

Junior Varsity Program Philosophy

The Junior Varsity level is intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive Varsity level performers. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program, team, and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play, in addition to social and emotional development. Junior Varsity programs work towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and striving for victory. The outcome of the contest becomes more of a consideration at this level. Playing time is not guaranteed at the Junior Varsity level. The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful Junior Varsity team and player. With the goal of becoming a Varsity player clearly in sight, the highest level of dedication and commitment is expected at this level.

Varsity Program Philosophy

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for a position on a Varsity team, as is the realization that a Varsity sport requires a strong commitment. The components of the philosophy of the Junior Varsity program are further developed and enhanced at the Varsity level. In the determination of the team roster, participation on the Varsity team during the previous year does not guarantee a spot on the team the subsequent year. Those demonstrating the best level of skill and attitude will be selected. The coach has the sole responsibility for selecting team members. While the primary goal at this level continues to emphasize sportsmanship and character, winning contests takes a higher priority and there is no guarantee that all team members will play in every contest.

Philosophy of Extracurricular Clubs & Activities

Members of each class are offered opportunities to participate in various programs and activities that are either extensions of the classroom, recreational, and/or entertainment based. These clubs and activities are meant to serve as avenues for leadership, social development, and in developing and using skills, attitudes, and knowledge that will prepare them for post-secondary experience.

It is the policy at Union Springs Central School that all students participating in extracurricular activities and athletics are required to abide by the eligibility guidelines and disciplinary regulations as set forth in this handbook.

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Academic Eligibility for Participation in Athletics & Extracurricular Activities

Students who fail to meet the required academic standards will become ineligible and will not be allowed to participate in interscholastic athletics or extracurricular activities until he/she demonstrates satisfactory academic progress.

The following rules for eligibility, based on academic performance, have been established:

1. A student is considered ineligible if he/she receives a failing grade in two or more courses or one course in two consecutive eligibility periods
2. The eligibility period is three weeks in length and is based on the following:
 - The first **Eligibility Period** will be determined by the mid-marking period grades in the first marking period and will run until the last day of the first marking period, every three week eligibility period thereafter will run from either the end of the marking period to the mid-marking period or the mid-marking period until the end of the marking period.
 - If a student fails the same course for two consecutive eligibility periods, that student would then become ineligible and have to follow the eligibility guidelines.

In order for a student to participate in his/her athletic or extracurricular activity while ineligible, the **student** must do the following:

- Obtain the eligibility monitoring form found in the athletic office. If a teacher is satisfied that the failing student has demonstrated satisfactory progress, that teacher may sign in the “return to eligibility” section. A teacher may return the student to ineligible status at any time if he/she believes the student has not continued to demonstrate satisfactory progress.
- If a student is not returned to eligibility he/she must obtain an “**Academic Progress Pass**” from his/her teacher. All students deemed ineligible must stay after school for extra help with a teacher in a course he/she is failing Monday through Thursday until such time as the student is returned to eligibility. The teacher with whom the student stayed must sign the Academic Progress Pass and that teacher may make comments on the student’s behavior/work ethic. The student will then take the Academic Progress Pass to the main office. If the student is participating in athletics or a club they will receive a stamped “**Participation Pass**” allowing them to participate in that day’s practice or meeting (not athletic contests, club trips, plays, etc.). **IT IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STUDENTS THAT ARE INELIGIBLE** to turn in their Academic Progress Pass to the main office prior to leaving the school on that day. If no Academic Progress Pass is turned in on that day, the student will receive lunch detention the following day.
- **For athletics**, post season participation is at the discretion of the **coach**.
- **For the High School Musical:**
 - a. **Students who are ineligible at the end of the 3rd marking period must see the director to arrange necessary measures to avoid being cut from the musical. Should the student still be ineligible after the cutoff date (one month from opening night) the student will no longer be part of the musical production.**
 - b. **Students who become ineligible after the one month prior to the opening night must:**
 1. **Stay with a teacher they’re failing for as described in the eligibility policy.**

Academic Eligibility for Participation in Athletics & Extracurricular Activities (continued)

- **For the High School Musical (continued):**

2. Stay for 3-5 detention to get work done until such time as the student becomes eligible or the musical is over.

3. The student must turn in a participation pass to the musical director for both a and b above in order to practice. (Opening night is typically on a Thursday, if so, the student does not have to stay from 3-5pm that evening).

4. Should the student not follow through with these stipulations they will not be allowed to participate in the musical.

3. Due to teacher meetings or teacher absences, students may approach the principal or athletic coordinator to sign his/her Participation Pass.
4. If a student has detention during the activity period, the detention monitor will sign the pass and make comments on the behavior/work ethic.

School Attendance

- Students may not practice or participate in a game or activity if he/she is absent from school on the day of a game or activity without a legal excuse. If a student arrives after first period without a legal excuse the student may not participate in a practice or meeting, or athletic contest or special event on that day. (See list of special events in Appendix C.)
- Students may not practice, play, or participate when games or activities are scheduled on non-school days (such as Saturdays or holidays) if he/she was absent or late (as described above) the previous school day without a legal excuse.
- The day following an athletic contest or event all students are expected to arrive at school at the regular time unless he/she has a legal excuse.
- It is the responsibility of students to seek the permission of the athletic coordinator/principal regarding being absent the day of a game/event for extenuating circumstances.
- Attendance sheets will be available for coaches on each physical education office door and electronically.

Changing Sports Teams

- A student can only participate in one interscholastic team per sports season.
- A student is considered on a team and may not try-out for another team in the same sports season when one of the following criteria has been met:
 - 1) Final cuts have been made for the team.
 - 2) The league roster for the sport has been completed and sent in.
 - 3) In the sport of wrestling, weight certifications have been completed.
- Anyone trying-out for a team or anyone who is a member of a team is bound by the requirements for participation as outlined by the coach, the athletic department, and the Code of Conduct.

Athletic Termination

When an individual decides to leave a team for any reason (illness, suspension, quitting, family circumstance, etc.) the coach is responsible for filling out the athletic termination form. This form is immediately submitted to the athletic coordinator for review. There are two types of releases:

- If a student receives an amicable release from his/her coach, no further action is required. The student is released from the activity without penalty.
- If a student does not receive an amicable release, then further action is required:
 - 1) The athletic coordinator/principal will review the reasons for termination with the authority to overrule the decision if deemed appropriate.
 - 2) After review, if the decision is upheld, the student will be placed on probation for the next sports season he/she participates in. The following penalties will also be instituted:
 - a) **The athlete will be suspended for 10 percent of the contests of the next team that they participate on. The number of contests will be computed by using the maximum number of allowed contests by the NYSPHSAA. This number of contests will be rounded to the nearest complete contest. For example in football the maximum allowed contests is 9, 10 percent would be .9 and equal to one contest. The athlete will be expected to attend all practices and follow all team and school rules throughout the season.**
 - b) **They will also be suspended for 10 percent of contests for that same sport during the next season. For example, if an athlete receives an unamicable release from football in 2016, they will be suspended for 10 percent of the 2017 football season.**

Athletic Termination (continued)

- c) While in grades 7th and 8th: When a student quits or is dismissed from an athletic team two times, the penalty will consist of the student being ineligible to participate in athletics for the remainder of those grade levels. Upon entering 9th grade, the athlete will follow the requirements listed in A and B under athletic termination on the previous page.**
- d) Should a player have a second unamicable release in their high school career they will be ineligible for athletic participation for the remainder of their time at Union Springs.**
- e) Athletes who receive an unamicable release from a team forfeits all awards including team awards.

***Athletes who quit or are unable to finish the season because of disciplinary action will forfeit ALL awards including team awards.

Sports Physicals

No student may practice or participate in any interscholastic competition until the school's physician has approved them. Sports physicals will be given and approved by our school doctor. Students not wishing to take a physical with the school's designated physician may substitute a physical taken with another doctor for review by the school's physician. Until the school's physician approves that student for participation, however, no participation is allowed. The sports physical will be valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the exam.

In addition to a physical, an updated medical history form must be completed prior to each season before any student is allowed to participate.

Athletic Placement Process

The New York State Athletic Placement Process is a process for screening EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES enrolled in 7th or 8th grade to determine his/her readiness to compete in interscholastic competition at the Junior Varsity and Varsity level. The Athletic Placement Process measures a student's physical maturity, fitness, and skill. The intent of this program is to allow student-athletes to safely participate at an appropriate level of competition based upon a student's readiness rather than his/her age. This program has been designed to assess the student-athlete's physical maturity, physical fitness, and skill so that the student-athlete may be placed at a level of competition which should result in increased opportunity, a fairer competitive environment, reduced injury, and greater personal satisfaction.

The head coach in each sport, in consultation with the student-athlete's physical education teacher and athletic coordinator, recommends an individual to be selected. In addition to the criteria already mentioned, the social and emotional maturity of each student-athlete is carefully assessed, especially in situations where students are attempting to play at an advanced level. For more information see the school policy manual.

Transportation Regulations

The following is a listing of regulations regarding travel to and from events:

- All students must travel with the school organization to the event.
- All rules that apply to District bus travel apply to students during trips to and from events.
- Spikes cannot be worn on the bus – nor can dirty or muddy footwear.
- Food and drink is allowed on the buses only if the school organization guarantees that the bus will be clean. The coach/advisor makes decisions regarding stopping for food (except when hazardous driving conditions exist). No food should be brought on the bus after a restaurant stop. Glass bottles are not allowed on the bus at any time.
- Passengers must remain seated while the bus is moving. The back two seats on the bus must remain empty.
- The changing of clothes is prohibited on the bus.
- The Transportation Supervisor predetermines routes to events.
- The coach/advisor is responsible for monitoring noise levels and behaviors of students while on the bus.
- What follows are the rules regarding transportation of the boys and girls golf, wrestling, cross country, field hockey, and football teams to practice. Because travel to and from practice sites presents a different set of conditions than those found in most sports, these rules are necessary. The rules allow us to stay within the mandates of New York State transportation laws for education while maintaining a common sense approach to transportation to and from athletic events. Team members who are licensed drivers will be allowed to drive to and from practice. Those members of the team who are driving must drive directly to the practice session. The only people allowed in the vehicle are the driver and a sibling. No passengers other than a sibling are allowed. Prior to having this privilege, the student driver and his/her parent or guardian must sign the Student Transportation Permission form and return it to the Union Springs Athletic Coordinator.
- When the District provides transportation to an event, the District will return all students to their point of departure or to the appropriate school in the District, except in the following circumstances:
 - (a) Students may ride home with his/her parents or guardians only after eye to eye contact between the parent/guardians and the advisor/coach confirming the intention to transport their child. In addition, parents will sign the appropriate form provided by the advisor/coach.
 - (b) Students may ride home with a non-parent provided that the student's parent/guardian completes a written form provided by the School District and such written notice is given to the advisor/coach twenty-four (24) hours prior to the departure of the district vehicle for the event.
- Coaches and advisors must be the last people to leave the school facility after a school trip returns. **Parents**, please be sure to pick up your child on time or make other timely arrangements. Consequences could result if parents/guardians are consistently not picking up his/her child in a timely manner.

Transportation Regulations (continued)

- If intervening circumstances make return transportation of a student impractical, then a representative of the District shall remain with the student until the parent or legal guardian has been contacted and informed of the intervening circumstances and the student has been delivered to the parent or legal guardian.
- Transportation for school events will be provided for students and school personnel only unless a spectator bus is offered.
- Buses may be provided for transportation of spectators to events at the discretion of the administrator, athletic coordinator, and transportation supervisor.

Vacations and Extracurricular Activities

When student/athletes commit to extracurricular activities, he/she should assume that practices and/or contests may take place over school vacations. The student/athlete and parent/guardian need to recognize and understand that at the discretion of the coach/advisor participation and playing time will be effected by practices and/or contests that have been missed due to vacations or other non-school related functions.

Supervision and Security

All student/athletes must recognize the need to lock up all clothing and valuables. The school is not responsible for items not properly secured. If such valuables need to come to practice or events, please encourage your student/athlete to ask the coach/advisor to secure such valuables.

No person will be allowed in the locker rooms of teams before or after practices or games other than the coaches, players, and approved athletic volunteer coaches. Absolutely no one else will be allowed in the locker rooms for many reasons including the safety and protection of our players.

Volunteer Coaches

Volunteers can make an impact to student success by contributing their time and talents to schools and students. There are many different areas available for participation with each school having their own rewarding opportunities. All volunteers, including volunteer athletic coaches, must be approved on an annual basis by the Union Springs Board of Education. Volunteers must complete the appropriate paperwork prior to board of education approval. Volunteer coaches must also have completed the appropriate New York State coaching certification requirements.

Medical Insurance

The Union Springs Central School District carries a limited accident protection insurance program for all students participating in interscholastic athletics. Parents shall be responsible for submitting the completed accident claim form and should contact the District business office regarding any questions.

Extracurricular Equipment

As a student/athlete you must accept full responsibility for taking care of all equipment issued to you. If any equipment is lost, stolen, or damaged, you **MUST** pay the replacement costs. If you have been issued any equipment for any sport/activity, you must return it to the coach at the end of the sport season or activity. If you fail to turn in all of your equipment, you will be ineligible to compete in any sport until the equipment is turned in or paid for. In addition, all post-season awards will be forfeited. Equipment is not to be worn by the athlete out of season or for general use.

Specialization

It is the philosophy of the Union Springs Central School District to encourage student participation in a number of sports, extracurricular activities, and clubs. Student specialization in only one sport or activity year round goes against the District philosophy of developing well-rounded students.

It is the expectation that coaches of the Union Springs Athletic Department will encourage students to play as many sports for the school as possible.

Student/athlete participation in other activities outside his/her current school sports season needs to be discussed with the current coach of the sport involved. If a scheduling conflict occurs, the school sport takes priority. When two school activities conflict, the coach and advisor will reach a scheduling resolution

Spectator Expectations

Athletic events are being played to promote good sportsmanship and fair play. We should recognize the purpose of athletics is to promote physical, mental, social and emotional well being of individual players and their fans and that this is a game between high school students, not professionals.

Section IV rules allow no alcoholic beverages, noisemakers, obscene language, taunting, objectionable cheers or throwing of objects. Anyone not abiding by the rules set forth by the Section may be subject to immediate ejection from the premises.

Your help in following the rules will be greatly appreciated. If you do your part as a spectator, we are sure that you and the players will have a worthwhile experience.

Union Springs Central School takes good decorum at sporting events very seriously. It is our goal to provide an enjoyable athletic experience for everyone. We hope both parents and students will embrace that initiative and support our efforts in that direction.

Conduct and Expectations for Students Participating In Athletics, Any School Clubs & Other Extracurricular Activities

As an athlete, member of a club, or student activity you represent the school in a special way. Therefore, you must maintain a high standard of conduct, both in and out of school, on and off the playing field, as a host or guest of an opponent, and in all your activities in the community. Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship and abide by all school rules. Students must refrain from the use of profanity, being disrespectful to any staff member and/or game official, and display good sportsmanship at all times.

Extracurricular Code of Conduct

The Board of Education, school administration, coaches and advisors believe that extracurricular activities are an integral part of the total educational program. High standards of behavior, scholarship, and citizenship are important to a sound Middle School and High School experience. Students volunteering to participate must assume the responsibilities of this privilege and are required to meet high expectations. These expectations involve the use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco or illegal drugs – these behaviors are prohibited for all students. Each administrator, teacher and staff member is committed to promote the physical and emotional growth of each Union Springs High School and Middle School student.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities – Non-School Related Alcohol & Drug Violations

Students who participate in extracurricular activities and/or athletics are role models for other students, both at school and away from school. They are subject to the same drug and alcohol rules at school or school events as all other students and the penalty for violation of those rules can also include suspension or termination of the privilege to participate in the athletic or extracurricular activity.

In addition, when a student who is a member of any extracurricular club, team, organization, etc. illegally uses, distributes or is in possession of alcohol or other drugs (or abuses prescription or non-prescription drugs) off school grounds and when not engaged in a school-sponsored activity, the process and consequences described below will apply. [If a student is at a party or other non-school event where other students are illegally consuming alcohol or drugs, the student is expected to promptly leave in a safe manner; if the student does not do this, he/she shall be presumed to have also possessed the alcohol or drug for purposes of this policy.] These rules apply to students while in middle school and again while in high school. A student will be given a clean slate when entering 9th grade.

When an allegation is made, the investigation will be initiated by the Principal or other designee as directed by the Principal and will include an opportunity for the student and parent to meet with the Principal to explain the student's side and provide any relevant evidence. The student or parent may appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools by a written appeal within five days of the initial decision. An appeal will not necessarily suspend the penalty.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities – Non-School Related Alcohol & Drug Violations (continued)

If the student is found guilty of the violation, the penalty will be:

- First violation – suspended from athletic competition or extracurricular contests or performances for a period of 30 calendar days. As a part of the suspension the student will not be permitted to practice for athletics or any performance/competition for 5 school days. The student would then be allowed to practice, but not participate in an event. Parents and the student will be offered the opportunity for the student to voluntarily participate in 10 hours of counseling which will reduce the suspension to 21 calendar days. Failure to complete the counseling will result in the reinstatement of the remainder of the penalty.
- Second violation – the suspension will be for 60 calendar days which would be reduced to 40 calendar days if the student chooses to participate in counseling for 20 hours. Failure to complete the counseling will result in the reinstatement of the remainder of the penalty.
- Third violation – removal of the student from any athletic or extracurricular participation for 90 calendar days. Counseling services will be recommended.
- Any additional violation will result in the removal of the individual from extracurricular or sports participation for the student's middle school or high school career (as applicable).
- If a suspension has not been completed prior to the end of the sport season or extracurricular activity it will carry over to the start of the next applicable season or activity period as determined by the Principal. Any student who is suspended and must carry over the remainder of the suspension will not be eligible to participate in pre-season practices (this will not prevent a student from trying out for a sport or activity).

Citizenship, Conduct and Expectations for Students Participating In Athletics, Any School Clubs or Extracurricular Activities

As an athlete, member of a club, or student activity you represent the school in a special way. Therefore you must maintain a high standard of conduct, both in and out of school, on and off the playing field, as a host or guest of an opponent, and in all of your activities in the community. Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship and abide by all school rules. Students must refrain from the use of profanity, being disrespectful to any staff member and/or game official, and display good sportsmanship at all times.

- Inappropriate conduct as described above will be handled by the Principal with further possible disciplinary actions by the coach/advisor (which could include suspension from contests and/or activities).

Citizenship, Conduct and Expectations for Students Participating In Athletics, Any School Clubs or Extracurricular Activities (continued)

Non-School Related Convictions

Should a student be convicted of a crime during their time as a high school student, even if the offense occurred during non-school hours or days of operation, that student is subject to school sanctioned penalties for breaking our citizenship **clause**. The penalties are described below. (Convictions are cumulative throughout the student's high school career. Suspension dates run from August 15 through June 30th, for example should a student be convicted on July 15, their suspension would not begin until an official sports/extracurricular season could potentially begin).

- First Violation – suspension from athletic competition or extracurricular contests or performances for a period of thirty calendar days. As part of the suspension the student will not be permitted to practice for athletics or any performance/competition for five school days
- Second Violation – removal from athletic competitions and practices or extracurricular contests/practices/performances for sixty calendar days
- Third Violation – The student will no longer be allowed to participate in athletics, extracurricular clubs, or other school sponsored activities

An appeal may be made within five (5) school days of the conviction date. (If said conviction occurred during a vacation, the five days to make an appeal will begin on the first day back from that vacation). Members of the appeal board include the High School Principal, Athletic Director, one staff member and one coach.

BULLYING

You have the right to: learn in a safe, inclusive, environment free of emotional, physical or cyber bullying, harassment or bias.

You have a responsibility to: contribute to ensuring the school environment is conducive for learning and is a place that feels safe and respectful for all. And if it's safe, to intervene as a helpful bystander ("upstander") and/or report instances of bullying, harassment, hazing, etc. using the Bullying Reporting Form.
Policy/background: See Board Policy 7424

The Board of Education is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality. The Board recognizes that discrimination, such as harassment, hazing and bullying, are detrimental to student learning and achievement. These behaviors interfere with the mission of the District to educate its students and disrupt the operation of the schools. Such behavior affects not only the students who are its targets but also those individuals who participate and witness such acts.

The Board of Education condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of discrimination, such as harassment, hazing, intimidation and bullying on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events. The following definitions are provided below to assist educators, families, students and the community with bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

All administrators, faculty, staff, parents/caregivers, families, volunteers, and students are expected to refuse to tolerate harassment, hazing, and bullying and to demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil. Furthermore, off-campus misconduct that endangers the health and safety of students or staff within the school, or can reasonably be forecast to substantially disrupt the educational process is prohibited. Examples of such misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Cyberbullying (i.e. inflicting willful and repeated harm through the use of electronic text).
- Threatening or harassing students or school personnel over the phone or other electronic mediums. Therefore,

discrimination, harassment, hazing or bullying that takes place at locations outside of school grounds which can be reasonably expected to materially and substantially interfere with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school or impinge on the rights of other students may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Definitions: Discrimination

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs.

Bullying

"Bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, electronic, social, graphic, or physical act that is perceived as being dehumanizing, intimidating, hostile, humiliating, threatening, or otherwise likely to evoke fear of physical harm or emotional distress and may be motivated either by bias or prejudice based upon any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, religious practice, ancestry, national origin, weight, ethnic group, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic, or is based upon association with another person who has or is perceived to have any distinguishing characteristic. Bullying and harassment also include forms of retaliation against individuals who report or cooperate in an investigation under policy 7424.

BULLYING (continued)

The most common forms of bullying include:

1. Physical: including but not limited to hitting, kicking, physical attacks, spitting, pushing, slapping, poking, tripping or causing to fall, scratching, any unwanted physical contact, taking or damaging personal belongings;
2. Verbal: including but not limited to taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, making threats, laughing at the expense of another, racial slurs, homophobic language, any unwanted or unreasonable verbal conduct directed toward or affecting another person that annoys, disturbs, frightens, insults, or offends;
3. Psychological: (also known as relational aggression, indirect or social bullying, covert aggression) including but not limited to spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, turning people against each other, social exclusion, extortion, shunning, intimidation, ruining someone's reputation, humiliating, sharing someone's private information, giving dirty looks or aggressive stares, or teasing about clothing or one's looks;
4. Cyberbullying: including but not limited to the use of cell phones, e-mail, YouTube chat rooms or social networking (or other electronic modalities) to harass, threaten or intimidate someone and can be transmitting by video, picture or words. Types of cyber bullying can include but are not limited to: posting, sending or forwarding inappropriate or derogatory messages or images, spam, viruses, humiliating messages; sharing private information, sending hateful or defamatory remarks that can include racial, ethnic or homophobic messages, or posting or contributing to polling sites.

Harassment

Harassment has been defined in various ways in federal and state law (including the penal law) and regulation. The Board recognizes that these definitions are important standards, but the Board's goal is to prevent behaviors from escalating to violations of law and instead, to promote a positive school environment and limit liability. The Dignity for All Students Act (§10-18 of Education Law) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person's actual or perceived:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race • Color • Weight • National origin • Ethnic group • Socio-economic status • Religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious practice • Disability • Sex • Sexual orientation • Gender (including gender identity & expression) • Other
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*Gender identity is one's self-conception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex or sex assigned at birth. Gender expression is the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms.

BULLYING (continued)

Hazing

Hazing is an induction, initiation or membership process involving harassment which creates public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule, or creates a situation where public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort, bodily injury or public ridicule is occurring or is likely to.

Up-stander

An up-stander is someone willing to stand up and take action in defense of others. Further, it identifies people who take helpful steps to help others in instances of bullying, discrimination, harassment or other injustices. Depending on the situation they help themselves or others by expressing opposition to the bullying or/and by providing emotional support to the target and/or by getting help for the target.

Reporting and Investigation

In order for the Board to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all targets and persons with knowledge of bullying report such behavior immediately to the principal, the principal's designee or the DASA Coordinator as soon as possible after the incident so that it may be effectively investigated and resolved. The District will also make a bullying reporting form available on its website and hard copies at each school to facilitate reporting. The District will collect relevant data from written and verbal complaints to allow reporting to the Board on an annual basis.

The District will investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner, although limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

In order to assist investigators, individuals should document the bullying as soon as it occurs and with as much detail as possible including: the nature of the incident(s); dates, times, places it has occurred; name of perpetrator(s); witnesses to the incident(s); and the target's response to the incident (refer to reporting form).

If, after appropriate investigation, the District finds that a student, an employee or a third party has violated this policy, corrective and possible disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Code of Conduct, applicable collective bargaining agreement, District policy and state law. If the reported behavior constitutes a civil rights violation, the complaint procedure associated with that policy will be followed. If either of the parties disagrees with the findings of the initial investigation, an appeal may be made as specified in the Code of Conduct.

Provisions for Students Who Don't Feel Safe at School

The Board acknowledges that, notwithstanding actions taken by District staff, intervention may require a specific coordinated approach if the child does not feel safe at school. Students who do not feel safe at school are limited in their capacity to learn and reach their academic potential. Staff, when aware of bullying, should determine if accommodations are needed and possible in order to help ensure the safety of the student and bring this to the attention of the building principal. The building principal, other appropriate staff, the student and the student's parent/caregiver will work together to define and implement any needed accommodations.

The District recognizes that there is a need to balance accommodations which enhance student safety against the potential to further stigmatize the targeted student. Therefore, each case will be handled individually, and the student, parent/guardian, and school administration will collaborate to establish safety provisions that best meet the needs of the targeted student. Follow-up discussion and/or meetings will be scheduled, as needed, to ensure that safety concerns have been adequately addressed and to determine when and if accommodations need to be changed or discontinued.

BULLYING (continued)

Dignity For All Students Act (DASA): An Overview

In September 2010, the New York State Legislature enacted the Dignity for All Students Act, which took effect on July 1, 2012, to make it the policy of the State to provide ALL students in New York public schools an environment free of discrimination and harassment. The goal of the Act is to create a safe and supportive school climate where elementary and secondary school students can learn and focus within a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting and harassment (which includes bullying and cyberbullying) on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The Dignity Act states that no student shall be subjected to harassment, bullying or discrimination by employees or students based on their actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

Harassment and bullying/cyberbullying is defined as any one of the following under the Dignity Act:

- The creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, or abuse, that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional, or physical well-being;
- A verbal or non-verbal act or actions that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety;
- A verbal or non-verbal act or actions that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student;
- A verbal or non-verbal act or actions that occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

The Dignity Act requires that all schools:

- Include instruction that supports the development of a school environment free of discrimination and harassment;
- Designate and train at least one staff member at every school to handle human relations in the areas of: race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex;
- Offer all employees training to raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination and/or harassment and to enable employees to prevent and respond to incidents of discrimination and harassment;
- Build a culture where instances of harassment, bullying, and discrimination are reported, investigated and responded to with prompt actions reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, and ensure the safety of the student(s) toward whom harassment, bullying or discrimination was directed.

UNION SPRINGS

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

All students involved in any athletic and extracurricular activity will be held accountable to this Extracurricular Code of Conduct. The purpose of having the parent and student sign this is to involve both. This Extracurricular Code of Conduct is in effect after all signatures are completed. If a student/parent or guardian refuses to sign, participation will be denied.

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

UNION SPRINGS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
**ATHLETIC & EXTRACURRICULAR
HANDBOOK**

2024-25



CONTACT

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UNION SPRINGS

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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