

2018-2019



STUDENT



LEADER

HANDBOOK

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Leader Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook was created by the New Mexico Activities Association's Student Leadership Advisory Council to provide guidance, support and ideas for student leaders in the Land of Enchantment. This handbook has been created for students by students and is intended to promote leadership as a lifestyle for activities and athletics participants within the member schools of the NMAA.

This handbook provides general guidelines for what student leaders can do to help their teams, groups, schools and communities to be positive representatives within the interscholastic arena. It should be used by student leaders to develop ways to build and improve relationships within the interscholastic family and will guide leaders in becoming effective in the promotion interscholastic values.

We hope that student leaders will use this as a guide to develop their own handbooks for their teams, groups and schools. You can personalize the ideas contained within this handbook to fit your needs. Please feel free to utilize this handbook and make it your own!

Sincerely,

The 2017-2018 NMAA Student Leadership Advisory Council

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Section I: What Is a Leader?

"Great leaders don't set out to be leaders. They set out to make a difference. It's never about the role – always about the goal."-Anonymous

If you are reading this handbook, chances are you are a leader within your school. You may have been chosen, elected or appointed to your position of leadership. You may not have known you were becoming a leader but, because you wanted to make a difference, you found yourself in a position to lead.

One definition of a leader is, "The person who leads or commands a group, organization or country." But, is that all? That definition seems too simplistic. To really define a leader, one must look at the qualities of effective leaders.

A good leader is...

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| • A team player | Decisive |
| • Willing to listen | Personable/Relatable |
| • Focused | Empowering |
| • Confident | Positive |
| • A person of integrity | Trustworthy |
| • Inspirational | Generous |
| • Passionate | Persistent |
| • Patient | Insightful |
| • Authentic | Communicative |
| • Open-minded | Accountable |

Being a leader isn't always easy. Leaders are faced with challenges regardless of if they are leaders within a school group, a community or a country. Some of the biggest challenges faced by leaders are:

- Humility during success.
- Confidence during setbacks.
- Knowing when to step back and follow.
- Follow through and putting plans into action.
- Leading CHANGE.
- Admitting mistakes.
- Listening with the goal of learning.
- Encouraging constructive dissent.
- Learning from criticism.
- Asking for feedback.
- Maintaining focus.
- Building your team.



Character

"Be more concerned with your character than your reputation because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are." – John Wooden

- A student-participant's focus should remain on competing with integrity and vigor, striving to perform at your best. The opportunity to compete is a chance to showcase your individual skills while seeking victory as a team or group. It is also an opportunity to learn to handle adversity and to respect an opponent for their individual skills and attributes.

- It is important to understand and remember that it is a privilege to be able to compete and represent your school.

- Student-participants have an essential role in the development and maintenance of sportsmanship and a responsibility to represent themselves and their institutions in a positive light.

- Because of the admiration and respect communities have for student-participants, their behavior plays a significant role in the behavior of fans and spectators. They serve as role models for the community and are a key component to sportsmanship.

Role in School and Community

"I don't think of myself as a role model. I do try to live in a compassionate, considerate and positive way. The only advice I can offer is to find what you love to do, find the joy in it and express yourself through your passion." – Barry Williams

- **Setting an example for behavior in and out of school and school activities** – It is imperative that student leaders have behavior that is beyond reproach in the classroom, on the court/field, at competitions and in their communities. This includes your social media activity. You are held to a higher standard as a student leader and eyes are on you.

- **AMBASSADORS of your schools within your communities and throughout the state** – How you conduct yourself outside of school, especially when traveling for meetings or competitions, reflects on your school and your community. Remember how you act in restaurants or other public venues and know that students are "under the microscope" at times. Make sure that how you conduct yourself is how you want your school and your community to be known.

If you are willing to continue to lead, knowing that you are accepting the challenges that you will most assuredly encounter, you will find success in your leadership journey.



Section II: Relationship with Adults

Coaches, Directors, Sponsors & Parents

"Listen to your elders' advice, not because they are always right but because they have more experiences of being wrong."-Anonymous

Within every school group or team, student leaders are fortunate to have built-in mentors – coaches, sponsors, advisors or directors – who can assist in setting and accomplishing goals as a group. Student leaders should realize the importance of the adult leaders in their groups and should involve them in projects and decisions of or for their group or teams.

Student leaders should strive to have a healthy working relationship with their adult leaders. In order to have an effective relationship, several factors are key:

- **Communication** – Student leaders should have a running and active dialogue with their adult leaders. Communication should be open and honest and student leaders should always present the full story to their coaches, sponsors, directors or advisors. In addition, students should have open discussions with their parents about their expectations when attending events as spectators. Issues with fan behavior have been increasingly problematic in New Mexico high schools and students must be willing to address the behaviors with their parents.
- **Mutual Respect** – Student leaders should always be respectful of their adult leaders but adult leaders should also be respectful of students as well. Adults and students must be respectful of one another in order to be an effective team and for the rest of the group to follow their lead.
- **Setting goals and making one another aware of goals** – Team or group leadership of any kind must set goals and the goals should be set collaboratively. If the adult and the student leader have a different idea for the direction of the group or team, everyone fails.



- **Being on the same page** – Student leaders and the adults involved in any group must be on the same page and must preach the same message to the group. If there is dissention between student and adult leaders, the rest of the group will certainly pick up on it and the effectiveness of the team or organization will suffer. If leaders disagree, that is absolutely okay, but disagreements should be handled privately and should not take up group or team time.

- **Proactive not reactive** – Student and adult leaders should always keep an ear to the ground and be aware of problems that are starting to crop up within the group. Being ahead of the issue instead of trying to react to it will save time and headaches as the year or the season progresses. Have a strategy developed for handling conflict in the group, have an agenda for meetings and have a game plan for each game or event. Being prepared and proactive is key to a successful team or group.

Contest Officials

“Respect for ourselves guides our morals. Respect for others guides our manners.” – Laurence Sterne

- **Referees are people too and they will make mistakes** – Remember that officials at the high school level are basically volunteers who are giving back to a sport or a community they love. They are going to miss calls and make mistakes. That is NEVER an excuse to degrade or demean them. If you are on a sports team, foster good relationship and positive communication with officials. If you are a fan, set an example of constructive behavior with your peers.

- **Get to know officials as human beings** – Officials have families who often sit in the stands and watch their games. The behavior of spectators is sometimes threatening to officials and their families. Before you yell at an official, just think about the fact that the five-year-old in the stands behind you might be the child of one of the referees.

- **Be hospitable** – Student groups have a great opportunity to serve as ambassadors/hosts to contest officials for games. Have a student greet them upon arrival and welcome them to your school. A little hospitality goes a long way!

- **Respect is a two-way street** – We expect students, coaches and spectators to respect officials but the same expectation holds true for officials in return. Officials should be professional and positively communicative at all times.



Section III: Relationship with Peers

Relationship with Your Team/Group

"Being a leader is not about you. It's about the people that are on your team and how you can help them to be successful." – Susan Vabejda

- **Lead by example** - Be the kind of leader you would look up to. How you conduct yourself as a student leader sets the bar for the rest of the team or group. Fulfilling your promises to your team or group is imperative. Be a person that your entire school and community respects and be mindful of the example you are setting for others, especially for the next generation of kids who want to one day fill your shoes.

- **Listen and HEAR what you are being told** – It is one thing to listen but it is quite another to be an active listener and to actually hear what people are saying to you. Respect the opinions of everyone on the team or in the group and make sure that they can trust you with their opinions and concerns. Take appropriate action and also involve your adult sponsor or coach if necessary. Never blow people off. They trust you to listen and to lead.

- **Collaborate** – An effective leader or captain is one who is a collaborative leader and not a dictator. Involve your team or project as much as you can. You can do more as a team than as an individual. Do not be a dictator or a delegator. Work WITH people instead of bossing them around.

- **Set team/group goals and expectations** – As you develop goals with your coach or sponsor, make sure you involve your team or group in the development of goals. Define your expectation of your team/group members. Have set responsibilities for officers, if part of a club or organization. Having a game plan going into a year or season is crucial. Duties should be established ahead of time so there are no surprises halfway through the year.

- **All on same page, contributing to same goal** – A cohesive unit is always more successful than one that is divided. Once goals are set and every individual knows his/her role, it is easier to come together to work in one direction.

- **HAVE FUN within team/group and in competition** – Interscholastic activities and athletics are about having fun. While there is always work to be done, part of why kids participate is to spend time with friends and to do something you enjoy. If you or someone in your group or on your team is no longer having fun, find out why! Try to make sure it is an enjoyable experience for the entire group.



Relationship with Other Teams/Groups in Your School

"There is more power in unity than division." – Emanuel Cleaver

- **Collaboration and UNITY** – Working together with other groups or teams on campus helps to build a sense of school community. Find mutual projects you can work on in order to improve things around your campus or around your neighborhood. Reach out to smaller groups that might need more manpower. Find out with other groups are doing to see if combining efforts might be more efficient.

- **Don't look down on other programs and cause division** – By working together, groups and teams can build a mutual respect for one another. Sports teams and activities groups may not the exact same interests or goals but you all have the desire to be a part of something bigger than yourselves. Use that commonality to build upon and always keep respect at the forefront of other activities on campus.

- **Support one another** – If one group does not feel supported by you, you will not receive support from them. Build a relationship of reciprocity with other groups and teams. Make sure to be the one to reach out to others so that you can rest assured that they will be there for you when you need them.

- Follow the Golden Rule – Treat others the way you want to be treated at all times.

- Activities are equal to sports! – Never diminish the importance of the activities groups on your campus. These activities provide valuable opportunities and engagement for students, just as athletics do.

Relationship with Opponents

"Self-improvement is the name of the game, and your primary objective is to strengthen yourself, not to destroy an opponent." – Maxwell Maltz

- **Respect** – Keep your composure and maintain self-control. Focus on competing at your best and within the rules of the game. Refrain from disrespectful behavior such as taunting, trash-talking, name-calling, or profane language. Win with humility and lose with grace.

- **The Golden Rule** - Treat your opponents the way you would like to be treated. Treat them with respect and acknowledge their personal skills, attributes and worth.

Team Building

"We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust and care for each other."

- **Bonding activities to develop respect and trust** – Make these both fun and challenging. They are a way to build team spirit, to problem solve, to see how your group or team responds to pressure. These should happen more than once a year or season and they serve as a nice break or reward for a hardworking group or team.

- **Community service projects** – Look for ways to give back to your communities. This is another way to build your team or group, while also giving back and paying it forward to others. A sense of selflessness as a team or group is important to growing as leaders and as human beings.



Section IV: Media & Social Media

Social media is not just a means of communication for young adults – it is a way of life. Whether it is Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or the other various avenues of social media, students in New Mexico schools are using social media as a means to get connected and stay connected.

While using social media is convenient and fun and can connect you with your friends from across the state, we encourage our students and especially our student-leaders to use social media responsibly. Social media is a great way to keep your team or group informed and can be used to send out messages to your parents, fans or your school and community but what you post can be seen by anyone and should be used cautiously, including your personal pages.

The National Federation has developed an online course for social media use for students. It can be found at the link below:

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61062/social-media-for-students>

Always keep in mind that what you post now can stay with you forever and your social media footprint is only as positive as you make it.

NMAA Social Media Handles

Facebook: New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA)

Twitter: @_NMAA

Instagram: allthingsnmaa

Section V: Role in NMAA Initiatives

1) Compete with Class

Student-participants are the integral part of competition. They are the reason for the contest. They spend all week training, practicing, balancing schoolwork and other activities for the opportunity and privilege to compete. Their opponents have made the same sacrifice. Treating your opponent with respect, dignity and courtesy honors their commitment and sacrifice and reflects positively upon you, your teammates and your community. Competition is designed to bring out the best in you but you must have an opponent in order for this to happen.

A student-participant's focus should remain on competing with integrity and vigor, striving to perform at your best. The opportunity to compete is a chance to showcase your individual skills while seeking victory as a team. It is also an opportunity to learn to handle adversity and to respect an opponent for their individual skills and attributes.

It is important to understand and remember that it is a privilege to be able to compete and represent your school. Student-participants have an essential role in the development and maintenance of sportsmanship and a responsibility to represent themselves and their institutions in a positive light. Because of the admiration and respect communities have for student-participants, their behavior plays a significant role in the behavior of fans and spectators. They serve as role models for the community and are a key component to sportsmanship.



Below are some guidelines for participants to follow to help make “Compete with Class” a priority during any interscholastic competition:

- Take responsibility for being a good role model and understand the seriousness of your role and what a privilege it is to represent your school.
- Treat your opponents the way you would like to be treated. Treat them with respect and acknowledge their personal skills, attributes and worth.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of officials. Calls will not always go your way. Be prepared to deal with it and move on to the next play.
- Keep your composure and maintain self-control.
- Focus on competing at your best and within the rules of the game.
- Refrain from disrespectful behavior such as taunting, trash-talking, name-calling, or profane language.
- Win with humility and lose with grace.
- Show respect for public property and equipment.
- Play the game for fun.
- Put the team ahead of yourself in every situation.
- Demonstrate respect for your opponents, coaches, officials, spectators and teammates.
- Be accountable for your own actions.

Student leaders should remind their groups and/or teams of the responsibilities of student participants in the interscholastic setting. Leaders should “walk the talk” and should consistently model these behaviors with their teams/groups and within their schools and communities.

2) Life of An Athlete

During the Fall of 2009, with the assistance of the New York based “Life of an Athlete Human Performance Project” and the support of the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the New Mexico Activities Association implemented Life of An Athlete.

The Life of An Athlete program was implemented to combat underage drinking among students in New Mexico. The primary focus of the LoA program is to teach high school student athletes about the dangers of alcohol, and other drugs, related to their athletic performance and life.

The New Mexico Activities Association proudly announced the launch of lifeofanathlete.com in 2010. The “Life of An Athlete” program is free and is believed to be the first interactive online program designed to teach high school student-athletes about the dangers of alcohol consumption related to their athletic performance and their life. The program website can be found at www.lifeofanathlete.com.

In the fall of 2013 the NMAA launched the second version of the Life of an Athlete program featuring a completely renovated platform with new content, personal stories and the addition of a question and answer panel consisting of New Mexico’s own high school athletes. The NMAA also launched the first LoA middle school program aimed at even earlier alcohol awareness and prevention.

As of October 24, 2016 over 47,000 individuals nationwide have completed the Life of An Athlete interactive online program. Of this total, over 39,000 New Mexico student-athletes have completed the online course.



Student leaders should continually reinforce the healthy lifestyles of student-athletes to their schools and should also be role models in this area. The modeling aspect applies to student leaders in non-athletic groups as well.

For more information regarding the NMAA's "Life of An Athlete" Program, please contact Scott Owen, NMAA Assistant Director, by phone at 505.923.3273 or email at s.owen@nmact.org.

3) #MyReasonWhy

The National Federation of State High School Associations, the rules making body for high school sports, has developed a #MyReasonWhy campaign. According to the NFHS web site (www.nfhs.org), there are countless benefits to participating in high school sports and activities, but a lot of concerns as well. To overcome resistance and drive participation, #MyReasonWhy highlights diverse stories and memories shared by students, parents, coaches, officials and community members. The NFHS and its member associations are working together to show how participation not only develops individual skills and character for the future, but drives a stronger sense of self and community that students will feel immediately and for the rest of their lives.

The NFHS believes the countless benefits of high school sports and activities that extend beyond the four corners of the field and walls of the auditorium—from lifelong lessons in hard work, perseverance and teamwork to leadership skills and citizenship. The NFHS administers high school activities and athletics across the nation to prepare over 11 million students involved in athletic and activity programs for the next level of life.

Whether you're out doing what you love or cheering on someone who is, we want to know your stories and the role high school sports and activities have played in your life. It can be as simple as sharing a picture, video or influential moment, or submitting your story to help tell others why they should join in. Send any #MyReasonWhy moments to Dana Pappas at danamarie@nmact.org. She will share them on the NMAA social media outlets as well as with the NFHS.

