INTRODUCTION

Dear Dwight Families and Students,

The purpose of this handbook is to explain and clarify the programs, policies, and philosophies of Dwight School’s Athletic Department. It is my hope that in reading this handbook, families and student-athletes will come to a clear understanding of what we do and why we do it. This handbook aims to supplement (but not replace) our other forms of communication to members of the Dwight athletic community.

Your suggestions for improving it are welcome and will be reflected in future editions.

Please consult with me should you have any questions or concerns about our Athletic Program. Thank you for your attention and time.

Go Lions!

Sincerely,

Jason Coy

Director of Athletics | jcoy@dwight.edu

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OUR PROUD SCHOLAR-ATHLETE TRADITION

The tradition of the scholar-athlete has long been embedded in the fabric of Dwight School. As archival photos from the turn of the 20th Century reveal, from the earliest days in our history, young men with “D”s emblazoned on their chest made newspaper headlines with record-breaking victories over local rivals. These same young men were destined to go on to elite colleges, illustrating how excelling in the classroom and on the playing field went hand-in-hand.

The scholar-athlete tradition is also deeply rooted in the Spahn family, beginning with Dr. M.C. Spahn, who served as Headmaster of Franklin School for 25 years. Dr. Spahn took the helm of Franklin, which later joined forces with Dwight, following a career as a professional basketball player. After playing as an All-American at CCNY, he turned pro and became the fifth all-time leading scorer in the history of the American Basketball League. Upon retiring from the game, he went on to earn a PhD in Education. While officially headmaster, everyone called Dr. Spahn “Coach,” reflecting his role as mentor.

Dr. Spahn’s son, Dwight School Chancellor Stephen Spahn, was encouraged from a young age to succeed equally in academic and athletic pursuits. He followed in his father’s footsteps, becoming an All-American basketball player at Dartmouth College, where he established several scoring records. Along with accolades came the belief that the passionate pursuit of excellence requires more than talent, but also hard work, dedication, persistence — and the support of great coaches.

Extending the Spahn tradition of scholar-athletes are Chancellor Spahn’s sons and Dwight graduates. Vice Chancellor Blake Spahn ’89 was Captain of the Columbia College men’s tennis Ivy League championship team. Kirk, who serves as Chairman of The Institute for Civic Leadership, was a member of Dartmouth College men’s tennis team. They both played for Dwight, where they were encouraged to pursue their athletic sparks of genius.

Over the course of nearly 50 years since Chancellor Spahn took the helm of Dwight, there have been generations of scholar-athletes. Some have broken records, claimed championship titles in their sport of choice, and competed proudly in the Olympic Games; all of whom, with the support of mentors, coaches, and teachers, have been encouraged to exceed beyond their own expectations both on and off the court.

That tradition continues today. Whether competing individually or as a member of a team, students are encouraged to do their personal best, be collegial, show good sportsmanship, and demonstrate the core values of a Dwight athlete, as outlined in this handbook.

MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

Dwight School’s Athletic Department believes that sports and fitness can be important elements of a student’s spark of genius, and stresses the importance of goal-setting, improvement, and the development of character. Ultimately, we believe that building character is the essence of the educational experience. Through sacrifice and effort, our student-athletes struggle, fail, succeed, and try again — always having fun in a nurturing but competitive environment designed to produce young people of great character.

The pursuit of team and individual excellence plays a major role in the development of our student-athletes. Our outstanding coaches work to improve individual and team performance; and to promote teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship. At Dwight, we have a long tradition of excellence and success in athletics, which continues today. Examples from recent years can be found on the Dwight website.

While winning championships produces a wonderful thrill and a well-deserved sense of pride, they are not ultimately how we measure success. In fact, we believe that success is the journey and the pursuit to give one’s best; this, along with the relationships formed within our diverse community, will have the strongest impact on our students. The value of discipline and perseverance, the importance of winning and losing with grace and humility, and the power of teamwork are just some of the life lessons learned from the Dwight athletic experience.

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Dwight School promotes the development of physical, mental, and social skills; a positive self-image; an understanding of teamwork and cooperation; and the sharing of personal experiences. Each person involved in the Dwight School Athletic Program — coaches, athletes, and supporters — has a unique opportunity to teach other participants positive life skills and values.

CORE VALUES OF THE DWIGHT SCHOLAR-ATHLETE

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Sacrifice — The Dwight School athlete realizes that his/her efforts should primarily be directed to the betterment of others.

Loyalty — The Dwight School athlete looks for ways to help others and the program.

Leadership and Honor — The Dwight School athlete follows all school rules and procedures, including attending all classes, assemblies, and any other school-related commitments.
Our athletes interact positively with all members of the community, listen respectfully to others, and always look to initiate conversation in an effort to make all feel welcome in our community. We believe that sacrifice, loyalty, leadership, and honor together help to build a commitment to our community. This helps our students to better understand their direct connection to one of the school’s three pillars: community.

ATTITUDE

COURAGE — Our athletes are positive, persistent, and confident. We respect all our opponents, but we fear none of them. We are always humble. We know that a truly confident athlete does not need to talk about his/her performance. Our athletes’ performances will speak for themselves.

EXCELLENCE — Our athletes know that the more we think only about winning, the less we will win. The more we think about the things we can control — our work ethic, our behavior, and our positive support and unconditional love for each other — the better we will perform.

PRIDE — Our athletes are proud to be a part of the 143-year-tradition of excellence in Dwight athletics.

We believe that courage, striving for excellence, and pride help to build a healthy and positive attitude within our school culture; and most importantly, help our students to better see their place in the world community. This supports another school pillar: global vision.

CHARACTER

DISCIPLINE — Our athletes do things the right way even when no one is watching. We make good decisions about our physical and emotional well-being, our community, and our school. Proper discipline leads to strong character, which in turn lends itself to the students’ discovery of their “spark of genius.”

PROGRAMS

Dwight School makes every effort to hire the most qualified educational-based coaches to ensure that our students’ athletic experiences are the best they can be. Our coaches will instill dedication, discipline, and desire, as well as the spirit of commitment and personal sacrifice upon which a successful team depends. Students should become better people because they have been through our Athletic Program.

It is the nature of athletic competition to pursue victory. However, a win-loss record does not always reflect a team’s successes. Our coaches goal is to guide a team – and its individual members -- to reach their maximum potential. Our coaching staff teaches Dwight student-athletes to strive to win with class, but also to lose with class.

Finally, because a successful interscholastic athletic program involves so many students, and because it provides forums to bring students, parents, and faculty together, it is vital to the spirit of any school and to the sense of pride that members of the community have in the school.

Grades 7 and 8

Currently, we offer a Middle School interscholastic program to students in grades 7 and 8. Which Middle School athletic teams we offer and how many we offer are determined by student interest and by the Junior Varsity and Varsity teams we are able to offer.

Although the Middle School program is competitive, it is designed chiefly to meet the developmental needs of its participants. At this level, the focus is on learning athletic skills, game rules, the fundamentals of team play, and sportsmanship. In that vein, athletes in our Middle School program are discouraged from practicing or playing on Junior Varsity or Varsity teams.

Middle School team coaches are expected to make every effort to provide each team member with an opportunity to play in every game, or if numbers make that goal impossible, to develop a rotation that will ensure meaningful playing time for each team member in as many games as possible. Unfortunately, because of the large number of students who want to play on certain teams and the safety and space issues those large numbers can raise, we sometimes have to limit the number of players on a Middle School team roster.

Junior Varsity

The Junior Varsity program is intended for Upper School students in grades 9-11 (seniors may not play JV) who display the potential to develop into Varsity-level performers. Although team membership varies, freshmen and sophomores occupy the majority of JV roster positions. In certain situations, juniors who might be expected to contribute to the Varsity level as seniors will be considered for JV teams. The final decision about Junior Varsity participation is made by the coach, in consultation with the Director of Athletics.

At the JV level, athletes are expected to have committed themselves to the team and to continued self-improvement. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, fundamental skills, strategy, and teamwork.

Although coaches make an effort to provide meaningful playing time for all team members at the JV level, the outcome of the game becomes a more important consideration than it is at the Middle School level. The amount of playing time a JV player has in a given game and throughout the season has more to do with
the coach’s assessment of how that player will perform in a given game against a given opponent than in the Middle School program.

Faithful attendance and effort at practice also become more important at the Junior Varsity level. Participants at this level are preparing themselves for the six-day-a-week commitment that will be expected of them at the Varsity level. Games and practices rarely take place on Sundays and holidays, but they sometimes occur on Saturdays and during school vacations. Except in rare cases during the December and March breaks, families of JV and Varsity athletes can count on having the first week to themselves. If families are at home during the second week, JV and Varsity athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practices and games.

**Varsity**

In every sport, Varsity competition is the culmination of the program. Normally, seniors and juniors make up the majority of a Varsity roster. Some sophomores and a very few freshman students are sometimes included on Dwight Varsity teams. Team size at the Varsity level is limited. The number of participants on a team is based on the number needed to conduct an effective practice and the number needed to compete in interscholastic games.

A student who chooses to participate on a Varsity team needs to understand his or her role on that team, and early in the season a coach is expected to communicate clearly and candidly with each Varsity player about that role. While we understand that playing time is important to every team member and coaches try to give every Varsity athlete a meaningful amount of playing time over the span of a season, playing time at the Varsity level is never guaranteed.

A positive attitude and a high level of skill are prerequisites for a position on a Varsity team, as is the realization that a Varsity sport may require a six-day-per-week commitment. As with JV teams, this commitment often extends into vacation periods. In particular, we expect all Varsity athletes to be available for practices and games during the second week of a two-week vacation period.

**Requirements for Participation on Teams**

**Obtain Medical Clearance**

All Dwight School athletes must be medically cleared before beginning practice for the school year in which they participate on a team. A medical form available from the school nurse/school will serve as the primary medical clearance form. In particular, fall season athletes need to submit their medical forms early in the summer to be sure of participating in our August pre-season tryout period. Any athlete injured during the season, who consults with a physician about that injury must be cleared by that physician before returning to the team.

**Attend the Organizational Meeting**

Before the start of each season, the team coach holds a meeting. At this time, the coach will provide important information for prospective team members, as well any paperwork required for participation. Please note that organizational meetings for fall teams take place during the spring.

**Complete an Athletic Consent Form**

All student-athletes and their parents or guardians must fill out and sign the Athletic Consent Form to be eligible to participate on a school team. While the coaching staff and other responsible school officials do everything within reason to protect every player against injury, participation in athletics carries with it a risk of injury; and in rare instances, those injuries can be serious and even life-threatening. Parents and student-athletes should carefully discuss and consider these risks before participation. The Athletic Consent Form can be found in the athletics section of www.dwight.edu. This form must be turned into your respective coach before the first day of practice.

**Attend Tryouts**

In accordance with our philosophy and our desire that as many students as possible participate in the Dwight School Athletic Program, coaches are encouraged to keep as many students as they can on a team. However, practice and game time, space, facilities, and other factors can limit the size of the team. In determining how many players to keep on a team, coaches always strive to maximize opportunities up to the point where numbers will dilute the quality of the experience for all team members.

**Selection Policy**

Choosing members of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. Non-Varsity coaches take into consideration the philosophy of their level of play as described earlier. They also normally consult with the Varsity coach and/or the Director of Athletics to help determine the final team rosters.
During the tryout period, coaches are responsible for providing the following information to all athletes:

- Length of the tryout period
- Criteria used to select the team
- The practice commitment if the student makes the team
- The game commitment if the student makes the team

The selection process will include three important elements. Each candidate will:

- Have participated in two practice sessions
- Have performed in at least one intra-squad competition, if possible
- If he or she is not selected for the team, each candidate shall be personally informed by the coach with an explanation of the decision. The coach will also discuss alternative possibilities for participation.

**Attending Practices**
Student-athletes are expected to attend all scheduled practice sessions and games unless excused by the coach. The importance of attendance is discussed in the philosophy section of this handbook. Note that fall practices for Varsity and Junior Varsity teams begin in the third week of August.

**SEASON STARTING DATES**

**Fall sports for Varsity and JV begin the third week of August:**
- JV & Varsity Volleyball
- Varsity Girls Soccer
- JV & Varsity Boys Soccer
- Varsity Girls & Boys Cross Country

**Fall sports for 7/8 begin the Monday before Labor Day:**
- 7/8 Co-ed Soccer
- 7/8 Boys and Girls Cross Country
- 7/8 Girls Volleyball

**All winter sports begin the first Monday after the first Saturday in November:**
- 7/8 Swimming
- Varsity Girls & Boys Swimming
- 7/8 Boys Basketball
- 7/8 Girls Basketball
- JV & Varsity Boys Basketball
- JV & Varsity Girls Basketball

**All spring sports begin the last Monday in February.**
- Varsity Baseball
- Varsity Girls & Boys Tennis
- 7/8 Co-ed Tennis
- Varsity Girls & Boys Track
- 7/8 Co-ed Track

**POLICIES AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Apparel**
The Athletic Department will attempt to create a team store for each sport season and share it with the Dwight community. Purchases of these items are on an individual basis and are not required. They are meant to supplement uniforms provided by Dwight.

Each team may elect to order team apparel separate from the team store. In such situations, the coach is responsible for adhering to department purchasing procedures. The coach and the Director of Athletics are responsible for the wording, logo, and graphics to be used. All apparel must adhere to the school colors of navy blue, white, and scarlet. All monies must be collected before an order can be sent out.

**Attendance**
A student must be signed into school prior to the start of 5th period in order to participate in after-school activities unless permission is granted by his/her Dean, Head of Upper School and/or the Director of Athletics. Exceptions to this rule are normally granted only for college visits. For health and safety reasons, a student who is absent or tardy due to illness cannot practice or compete on that day.

**Captains**
The selection of captains falls within the coach’s discretion. The selection process and eligibility varies from team to team and from coach to coach. At Dwight School, the position of captain is not reserved for seniors. As a captain, you assume a leadership role. Your coach, your teammates, the Dwight community and visitors judge our school by your conduct and attitudes, both on and off the field. Student athletes are advised to discuss expectations with a coach prior to accepting this position.
Competing on Non-school Teams in Season
Opportunities exist for Dwight students at all levels to participate on non-school teams while participating on school-sponsored teams. When these situations occur, there must be communication between the student, parent or guardian, the coaches, and the athletic administration. Participation on the school team must take priority over obligations to the non-school team.

Equipment/Uniforms
Athletic equipment becomes more and more costly each year. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to care for and return all clothing and equipment that he/she has been issued. If any equipment, including the team uniform, is lost or damaged, the student will be charged the replacement cost of that equipment. If a student does not return equipment, we reserve the right to withhold grades, yearbooks, to deny that student the opportunity to participate on another team, or to take what measures we deem appropriate to encourage the return or replacement of that equipment.

Family Vacations
When parents and student-athletes choose to take family vacations during sports seasons, the time missed by the student can affect team chemistry and the athlete’s own conditioning. Students who miss practices or games for any reason may have their position or playing time adjusted. Coaches will make every effort to inform parents and students of the vacation schedule as far in advance as possible. Conversely, parents and student-athletes should inform the coach of potential schedule conflicts as far in advance as possible. As explained above, during a two-week break from school, practices and/or team trips will normally take place in the second week, so that family vacations can be scheduled for the first week.

Individual Team Policies
In addition to Athletic Department policies, coaches may establish supplementary policies with the approval of the Director of Athletics. The coach must provide these policies to all team members and explain them at the earliest possible team meeting. Penalties for violating team rules should also be provided to all team members and explained fully by the coach.

Post-season Competition
Post-season competition is available to teams and individuals whose performance during the regular season merits the opportunity to participate in post-season tournaments and meets. Most of our teams compete for Independent School Championships. Since Dwight School is a member of the New York State Association of Independent Schools Athletic Association (NYSAISAA), most of our post-season opportunities involve this association. In some cases our teams compete in a state federation tournament through NYSAISAA. In these latter cases, the team or individual(s) must have a truly extraordinary season to be considered for post-season competition.

Please note that if your son or daughter is on a team or individual sport that declares for a federation tournament, he or she is obliged to participate in that tournament. There are strict rules regarding the declaration process. It is a binding contract that the state takes very seriously.

Resigning from a Team
We believe that a student who is selected for a team after the tryout period should remain on the team through the season and that quitting is almost never the right course of action for a team member. On occasion, an athlete may have a good reason for resigning from a team. In such cases, he or she should consult with the coach to explain the reason. After the conversation, the student will be asked to reflect on the conversation for three days before making a final decision.

Reporting of Injuries or Illness
It is the student-athlete’s responsibility immediately to report any injury to his or her coach. All injuries that are seen by our coaching staff require the completion of an Accident Report Form. If the injury is so severe that we recommend seeking medical attention, an onsite athletic trainer, coach, or athletic administrator will call home immediately. Once a physician treats an athlete, the athlete must obtain the doctor’s permission to return to the team.

Schedules
Dwight School is a proud member of NYSAISAA. Our primary game schedules are in the ACIS (Athletic Conference of Independent Schools) or the ISAL (Independent School Athletic League). Sometimes a change in schedule is necessary due to school conflicts or inclement weather. We do everything we can to complete the assigned league schedule. Non-league games will become secondary to a league game if necessary.

Missing Class Time and Early Dismissals
Every effort will be made to schedule athletic events to avoid students missing academic classes. Students are responsible for the academic material due or assigned the day of the missed class. As some of our contests are far from school, in order to arrive on time, early dismissals will occur on occasion. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate the early dismissal to their teacher(s) in advance. Confirmation of said early dismissals will be on the team pages and in the daily bulletin. This communication is meant for reminders and confirmation to teachers, not in lieu of the direct line of communication between student and teacher.
Extra-curricular Activities
The Athletics Department understands that each student should have the opportunity for a wide range of extracurricular experiences, and we try to schedule events in a manner that minimizes conflicts. Students need to recognize, however, that absences from practices will hinder skill development and physical conditioning, as well as jeopardize team unity. Time missed from practice, therefore, will influence an athlete’s performance, and potentially his/her playing time and/or position with the team. A student who has decided to participate in more than one extracurricular activity during an athletic season when he or she is on a team should provide as much information as possible to all parties, so that conflicts can be minimized.

Spectators and Sportsmanship
We appreciate fan support for Dwight School athletic teams, as long as the cheers are positive and directed toward our teams’ athletes. At no time should spectators be directing negative comments toward opposing teams or coaches or toward referees, or speaking directly to participants in an athletic event. It is both distracting and dangerous. Please remember that these are high school students participating in an extension of the classroom environment, not professional athletes.

Dwight School promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches and fans. We request the cooperation of fans in supporting the participants and officials. Profanity, racial or ethnic slurs, fighting or other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, and are grounds for removal of the offenders from the site of competition and further disciplinary action. The use of artificial noisemakers is not permitted at Dwight athletic contests. Smoking is not permitted at any interscholastic games in which Dwight participates, whether indoors or outdoors, home or away.

Last-minute Cancellations
Team pages on MyDwight and the athletic tab on www.dwight.edu are updated daily with information regarding the day’s events, sites, and times. In the case of inclement weather, decisions to cancel games or practices are not normally made until 1 pm. Parents and athletes should check those sites for last-minute changes in the day’s schedule.

Sports Standards
The New York State Association of Independent Schools Athletic Association (NYSAISSA) Sports Standards outlines the minimum number of required practices an individual or team shall need before participation in a scrimmage or contest.

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Practices Before 1st Scrimmage</th>
<th>Practices Before 1st Contest</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Baseball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
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<td>Cross Country</td>
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<td>Track &amp; Field</td>
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<td>Soccer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
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</tbody>
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** Coaches will use their discretion to determine what constitutes a practice. Practices with outside teams or on your own will not count toward training requirements. **

Team Trips
Many varsity teams supplement either their pre-season preparation or their competitive schedule by traveling during the summer, or during the winter or spring recesses. All costs associated with team travel are to be incurred by the participants. As with apparel, students on financial aid are eligible for a discount, and should consult with the Director of Athletics and/or Trip Director.

Transportation
Student-athletes will be transported to and from games and/or scrimmages on school-authorized vehicles. All transportation provided by Dwight will originate from the 18 West 89th St or 291 Central Park West. Return trips will bring the teams back to the same spot. If a bus is traveling in or through Manhattan, the coach may ask the bus driver to make a stop along the planned route. This stop will occur only if the bus driver believes it is safe to stop.

Under certain circumstances or in exceptional situations, students may be excused from riding back to school from an away athletic event on school authorized transportation, provided that the parent or guardian has checked the proper box on the athletic participation form.

Dwight’s Website
Visit www.dwight.edu and click on the Programs, and then choose Athletics for sports schedules, as well as updated scores from prior games and directions to all home and away contests. Changes in the schedule are inevitable, but every effort is made to update information on a timely basis.