



## Nathan Hale High School Boys Basketball Parent and Player Handbook

### **Overview**

This policy handbook provides a framework from which coaches, athletes and parents can best work together for the benefit of our basketball program. The athletic program at Nathan Hale High School is a very practical part of the educational process. High school basketball, and high school sports in general, begins the real-life process of competing with one's self to make a team and then working hard in a way that helps the whole team to win.

***Basketball Objective:*** *Our ultimate objective is to provide a positive environment in which student-athletes not only achieve athletic success but lay the foundation for success in life.*

*The high school basketball objective is to create a winning varsity team, and all boys' basketball operations, at all levels, work towards this objective.*

### **Players**

How you bond and handle your role are keys to Hale's team success and to the individual player's success. Player's attitude and reaction to perceived adversity are tested almost daily at this stage, and your reactions will affect your development. Our ability to bond, work hard, handle competitive conflict, have a positive attitude and stay focused on the goal will ultimately define our season.

### **Parents**

You are the single most important element to our success. A "team" of parents is a key to winning. Parents face emotions that duplicate their son's and often are stronger. We hope that parents will choose to be parents and fans. Players whose parents encourage them to work hard and try to excel for the *team's* sake have fun, improve, and play loose. Positive attitudes reinforce this. Remember this is their time as an athlete.

### **Bonding**

Teams and coaches develop special bonds. We encourage our players to talk candidly with us about what bothers them on and off the court and how they can improve what may be holding them back or altering their focus. We look forward to getting to know our players better off the court as young men and leaders of our school and community. We will have "bonding" opportunities throughout the season to better help the players and coaches get to know each other better and this time together is necessary for our team.

### **Playing time at the Varsity Level**

The grade school days of equal or guaranteed minimum playing time are over, and the process of annually competing to make the team begins. Younger players with superb talent and attitude can,

and will, replace players who have been in the program longer. The replacement may occur in a starting lineup or on the team itself. Those who make the team at any level learn the value of voluntary, year-round hard work and self-development, discipline, team building, sportsmanship, and participating in a competitive environment.

Coaches weigh attitude, hard work, and talent at the varsity level. The best players will play the most minutes, as long as they have the right attitude. There is no distinction between freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. All of the players are viewed as basketball players and evaluated accordingly.

Starting lineups may change from game to game based on a number of factors. The most common change is due to match-ups with the opposing team and the resulting game strategy. In general, the most talented players will play most of the time.

### **Playing time at the freshman and JV level**

*Freshman, sophomore, and varsity are **NOT** three opportunities to play basketball. They are one program, headed by the varsity coach, whose two lower levels develop players for the varsity.*

While the varsity-level playing qualifications are generally true at the lower level, and are always true in regard to attitude, some players with “lesser” talent may get more playing time because the potential for a player’s development into an impact player is obvious to the coaches, or a need is foreseen on the varsity in the near future (1-3 years) for a particular quality, position, or skill. This is a large shift from grade school basketball and sometimes misunderstandings occur because playing time does not *always and consistently* match the best talent at the lower levels.

\*The goal of the freshman team in the first three quarters is to play all players (must be eligible and have the right attitude) and in the fourth quarter, the best play. This will take place for the first 9-10 games of the season. This is an opportunity for all players to get playing time. After this period the coach will play as deep as possible but with the focus being on winning.

\*The JV team will attempt to play as many players as possible in order to win. The goal is still to develop talent and win.

### **Depth**

A great team has depth from top to bottom. A winning team has versatility of strategy, height, speed, and ability. A winning team cannot be beaten because it has too many weapons and ways to win.

Players who do not start, or play in every or most games, sometimes think of themselves as “practice players.” All players **MUST** practice with the focus of trying to get better each day and being prepared for the moment the team needs them. If a player can focus on being the best player they can be, being better than they were yesterday, working on new skills or weaknesses to their game, each day they will push themselves and their teammates and make all of us better.

\*Poor attitudes can have a dramatic, negative impact on the team. Players who display bad attitudes will have a conversation with their coach and from there they can be benched, suspended, or removed from the team based on one flagrant incident or a history of minor disruptive actions or words, *at the coaches’ discretion.*

## **Sportsmanship Attitude**

Coaches, athletes, students, and spectators must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of our school AND a winning attitude on our team. Cheer for our team, not against the opponents or the officials. Becoming angry because of bad calls or a bad attitude on the part of opponents or their crowd can disrupt our teams' focus. Let's do what we came to do: play as hard as we can and play with class.

On the floor, the team has leaders in the point guard and the captains. From the sidelines, the team has one leader, the head coach. We understand that some parents have been coaches elsewhere and that some are just plain fans, but please turn excitement into cheering rather than coaching from the bleachers.

## **Coach/Player/Parent Communication**

Primary communication should be between the player and the coach. As coaches, our belief is an open door policy between the coaching staff and the players. Should your son have a question or concern, encourage him to talk to his coach. There may be times when players and parents find it difficult to understand how playing time is allotted, why people are playing certain positions, game strategy, etc. It is imperative that parents and athletes trust that our coaches are trying to do what is best for the team and all individuals involved. It is important to understand that the coaches are the ones with the team on a daily basis in practice and competition, and therefore will make judgments based on the best interest of the team. Playing time, players' positions, and strategy is up to the discretion of the coaching staff. However, if a parent has a concern to discuss with a coach, there is a process in place. The proper order of communication is:

1. Ask your son to meet with his coach first to discuss the matter.
2. Parent(s), son, and coaches will set a meeting time.
3. Meet with varsity head coach (if not the person in questions 1 & 2).
4. Meet with the Athletic Director, coaches involved, the player and parent(s).

It is important to all parties that such meetings be constructive. **It is counterproductive to confront and productive to discuss.** It is also important to all parties involved to discuss the issues at times other than before or after a game or practice, when emotions run high. Please schedule a face to face meeting to take place at least 24 hours after the request and the focus is on conflict resolution rather than airing out complaints. Remember that openness to discussion does not equal the changes you would like.

## **Ideas to Keep in Mind**

- Basketball is supposed to be fun, let's have fun. Enjoy the moments on and off the court.
- We represent our families, our school, our community and our team.
- Basketball is a privilege for student-athletes, focus on school.
- Work as hard as you can each and every day.
- Be proud to be a Husky and a basketball member.

Go Huskies!