

Expectations and Process for Conflict Resolution involving Athletics/Activities

Martensdale-St. Marys values extra-curricular activities, and we have a proud history of excellence in many areas. Research has shown that students who participate in extra-curricular activities tend to perform better in academics and be more prepared for life beyond high school. We strive to ensure a positive, rewarding experience for students who participate in these activities, and despite our collective efforts, conflicts may arise throughout the season. Whether it is a difference of coaching philosophies, playing time, or something more serious, Martensdale-St. Marys is committed to thoughtful, appropriate resolution of these conflicts. Two guidelines to follow in any situation:

- 1) Never attempt to address a conflict during/immediately following a contest; and
- 2) Meet face-to-face, not over the phone or email

Student-athletes, parents, or coaches who raise concerns about any aspect of an extra-curricular activity must follow the five steps as outlined below. The reason for this process is to ensure conflicts are properly addressed and resolved, to develop open lines of communication between all parties involved, and to provide courses of action that protect the student-athlete, the coach, the parents, and the MStM community.

If there is a concern about an extra-curricular activity, then

- 1) **Parent(s) and student-athlete meet with coach/activity sponsor.** The student's presence in the meeting will ensure a lesser likelihood of miscommunication or misconception of the meeting's content. In matters of sensitive issues, the student may not be involved in this meeting at the request of parents or administration. Most issues can be resolved at this step or even before this first step – it is a matter of communication.

If the matter is not resolved to the concerned party's satisfaction, then

- 2) **Parent(s) and student-athlete meet with student-athlete, activities director, and parent(s).** The coach may be invited to attend this meeting if the situation warrants his or her presence.

If the matter remains unresolved, then

- 3) **Parent(s) and student-athlete meet with principal.** Explain what steps have been taken to resolve the matter as well as reasons why the concerned parties remain unsatisfied.

If the matter still remains unresolved, then

- 4) **Parent(s) and student-athlete meet with superintendent.** This is the final effort to resolve the matter prior to a Board hearing. If parties are still unsatisfied, the superintendent will determine if due process has been afforded to all parties, and that each party has approached a resolution in good faith.

If the previous four steps of conflict resolution have not satisfactorily addressed the concerned parties' issues, then

5) **Parent(s), student-athlete, coach/activity sponsor, activities director, and principal participate in a hearing before Board of Directors.** In most cases, this will be held in a closed session of a Board meeting, if only because once the matter goes this far, the discussion is a personnel matter. A request in writing must be made to the superintendent prior to the next Board meeting.

Exceptions:

The aforementioned five-step process will not be used in the following matters:

- Allegations of abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional)
- Allegations of criminal behavior
- Allegations of bullying/harassment
- Violations of student code of conduct when the coach/activity sponsor is present

Issues that are essentially discipline matters – for either coaches or players – will be handled beyond the steps of this process, and will most likely involve the concerned parties meeting with the activities director and principal.

Playing time will not be a topic for discussion or dispute with coaches at any time. Coaches are hired and entrusted to make those determinations for the good of the program, and it is in their rights to do so.

All coaches are evaluated on a yearly basis and parent concerns are a part of that process.