

## Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we prepare for the upcoming season, it is an appropriate time to review the goals of our program as they relate to sportsmanship. As an educational institution, our school is committed to teaching our young people to set goals, strive for excellence, and to properly handle whatever adversity they encounter along the way. This aim is the same in the classroom as it is on the playing field.

The greatest challenge to good sportsmanship is adversity. When things are not going well, the easy response is to shift the blame. In particular, to shift it away from ourselves to our opponents, or, more often, to the officials. When this is done, the focus is away from the positive, “to play harder or better,” to the negative, “how can we possibly overcome the bad calls”. “As teachers/coaches, we feel it is essential that our athletes maintain a positive approach to handling adversity. We need the support of our parent-body as role models, if we are to accomplish this.

At times, some parents have become quite vocal at games and loudly criticized both game officials and opposing players. This type of abusive behavior is counter-productive to what we are trying to teach. In addition, it creates a very uncomfortable environment for those fans who have come out to support their team and enjoy the game. Finally, it is an embarrassment to our school and to the young people on the playing field. We are asking all our fans to keep comments positive and upbeat.

As a school we hire the game officials during the regular season. All of our officials are deemed competent by our coaching staff and athletic administration. They are not perfect, and their interpretation of the action may be different from yours. However, they are an essential part of the game, and they are doing the best they can. Let's strive to pay less attention to their performance and more to the skills of our young athletes. Let's come out in the next few weeks and cheer our team on to success.