



# PenMet Parks

Parks For All. Parks For Life.

PenMet Parks  
Youth Sports Parent Handbook



**Welcome to Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet Parks) Youth Sports Program** – we are excited to have you as part of our community. PenMet Parks is dedicated to fostering a positive and enriching experience for youth through sports. At the heart of our mission is the belief that sports play a crucial role in the development of young athletes, not just in physical fitness but also in building character, teamwork, and resilience.

We are committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment where every child can thrive. We understand the vital role parents play in the success of youth sports programs. Your involvement and support are integral to creating a holistic and nurturing atmosphere for our young athletes. Together, we aim to instill values of discipline, sportsmanship, and a love for healthy competition.

### **PenMet Parks Mission**

To enhance the quality of life by providing parks and recreation opportunities for our community.

### **PenMet Parks Youth Sports Philosophy**

Our philosophy embodies three core principles. These principals reflect the types of programs we focus on offering to the community and the style of implementation. Our goal is to get kids to play, be physically active, and to build community through engaging youth sports opportunities.

#### **Everybody Plays**

PenMet Parks youth sports offer opportunities for all to participate regardless of income or athletic ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of all children and to encourage children and their parents/guardians to do the same. All players should receive equal practice time and play at least half of every game.

#### **The Joy of Being Active**

PenMet Parks youth sports focuses on building character, building community, and creating memorable experiences. Adults should make decisions that prioritize player development over winning games. Participants should learn to be engaged citizens when they participate in PenMet Parks youth sports.

#### **Building Community Through Sports**

PenMet Parks is more successful when everyone is engaged: kids, coaches, staff, and parents/guardians. We encourage parents to be involved appropriately in their child’s sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child’s participation.

## Youth Sports Staff Contact

253-858-3400 | 2416 14th Ave NW Gig Harbor, WA 98335 | [youthsports@penmetparks.org](mailto:youthsports@penmetparks.org)

## Annual Sports Calendar

Sport	Registration Opens	Season Runs
Youth Basketball	November	January - March
Youth Baseball & Fastpitch	February	April – June
Youth Flag Football – <i>Spring</i>	March	May – June
Youth Flag Football – <i>Fall</i>	June	September – November
Youth Soccer	June	September – November

## Participation

- **Registration:** Each child participant must be registered through PenMet Parks prior to participating. Registration fees must be paid at the time of registration.
- **No Try-Outs:** PenMet Parks Youth Sports programs do not require participants to try-out to participate.
- **All Play:** Each child should receive equal playing time.
- **Insurance:** It is recommended that all participants be covered under a personal medical/accident insurance policy.
- **1-Hr Parent Orientation Meeting:** Prior to the start of each season, PenMet Parks will host a parent orientation meeting. During the meeting, policies, procedures, and other important information will be distributed and discussed.

## Grade Level

Teams are grouped by grade level based on the current school year. For example, if your child is starting 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in September they would be playing in the Grade 2-3 age group.

- Pre-K/Junior All Stars: Ages 3.5 to 5
- Elementary School: Kindergarten-First Grade, Grades 2-3, and Grades 4-5
- Middle School: Grades 6-8
- High School: Grades 9-12 (available on a sport by sport basis)

## Coaches

### Parent & Community Volunteers

Throughout this handbook, the term "coach" encompasses all coaches, instructors, and their assistants. Our coaching staff consists of parents and community volunteers who generously dedicate their time without compensation. Coaches are the key to success for our youth sports leagues. No coaching or playing experience is needed, we will supply you with the equipment, training tools, and practice plans to ensure your coaching success. If you would like to learn more about what it means to be a coach or would like to apply to be a coach, email [youthsports@penmetparks.org](mailto:youthsports@penmetparks.org) or visit [Youth Sports - PenMet Parks](#). Volunteer coaches also receive one participant fee waiver for every team they coach.

To ensure the safety of all participants in PenMet Parks Youth Sports Programs, all individuals wishing to volunteer as a coach must **complete** the following:

- PenMet Volunteer Coach Application
- Criminal background check
- Online concussion awareness training
- Attend coaches meeting

### Coaches as Mentors

Your coach is just like you, a parent or caring member of the community who wants to help kids thrive. We ask that our coaches serve not just as a coach, but as a leader and mentor for their team. We trust them to foster collaboration and teamwork and provide the support that our youth athletes need to develop both on and off the field or court.

### Coach Requests

Upon registering, parents may request a coach, however, we will not be able to accommodate all requests.

### Team without a Coach

If your team lacks a coach, your child's season won't be canceled, or the team disbanded. We hope parents will step up to co-coach and PenMet Parks will help and support as needed.

### Team Reduction Guidelines

Each sport has a required number of players to form a team. If a team is below the minimum number of players nearing the end of registration, ALL members of that team will be moved to another team if there is space for all the players. We do this to provide every registered child with the opportunity to play, as well as to provide ample time to recruit coaches. We will do our best to keep those who signed up together on the same team.

## Communication

In order to ensure that you receive all necessary communication from PenMet Parks, please make sure that your primary email address is up to date in ActiveNet. Visit our website [Sports and Fitness Programs - PenMet Parks](#) for more information and resources.

### Pre-Season

You will begin receiving communication from the youth sports department at least two weeks prior to the season beginning. Our hope is that you will hear from your coach one week prior to the season beginning. There are reasons why this may not occur, so do not panic. The emails you receive from the youth sports staff will have everything you need to know. Be sure to check your spam folder as the initial email may end up there.

### In-Season

You will receive an email update from the sports staff if we need to share any updates, changes, or reminders.

### TeamSideline

TeamSideline.com is a sport league management software that helps leagues manage their team's game schedule online. You will be able to view all team schedules and updates on the PenMet Team Sideline page.

It is very important we have your correct email and mobile number on file to ensure you are receiving communication. If you feel as though you never received a log-in email or are not receiving updates, please check your trash and junk mail. You can also download the app and sign up to receive text message alerts. Please sign up for email and text communication here: [PenMet Parks \(teamsideline.com\)](#)

## Season Logistics & Details

### Jerseys & Equipment

All athletes will receive a jersey, which will be handed out by your coach at or before the first game of the season. Everyone should be dressed in athletic attire and should bring a water bottle to stay hydrated and cool. Players should bring their own ball to practice, but not to games. All personal items need to be clearly labeled with the child's name. We recommend the following equipment for each sport:

- **Soccer:** shin guards, socks that cover the shin guards, and cleats
- **Flag Football:** mouth guard and cleats
- **Baseball:** fitted baseball glove and cleats (bat and helmets are provided, however you are welcome to bring your own if you'd like)
- **Basketball:** non-marking court shoes

### Drop Off / Pick Up

It is our expectation that parents/guardians will stay during both practice and games. You are permitted to have another adult chaperone for your child. This can be a sibling or other relative as well as caregivers over the age of 16. If your child is 12 or older they can attend practice and games without individual adult supervision. If for some reason you are not able to be onsite with your child, please coordinate with another team parent.

### Lost Items

If a personal item becomes misplaced, a youth sports coach or staff will hold onto it until the following practice or will take it to the Volunteer Vern Pavilion at Sehmel Homestead Park and staff will place it in the lost and found. If you've lost an item, please call our Administrative Headquarters at (253) 858-3400 and we can let you know if your item was turned in. We suggest that you label any clothing, water bottles, or other personal belongings.

### Game Days

Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes early to allow ample time for parking, finding the correct field or court, and seeing to any last-minute needs prior to the beginning of the game.

### Playing Time

All children are guaranteed 50 percent playing time regardless of team size or personal ability. If you believe that your coach is not adhering to this policy, please let your coach know or the Youth Sports Coordinator. In our younger age divisions, our officials will stop the game halfway through each period to help facilitate player substitutions. In the older divisions, we recommend having an assistant coach to help with substituting players in and out of the game. Mistakes do happen, but we will work with you to be sure that they do not become a regular part of your sport experience.

### Safety

A safe playing environment is essential to provide a high-quality recreational sports program. PenMet Parks Staff will inspect the playing area prior to the beginning of any game or practice to look for hazards. Coaches and parents should report all findings or accidents to the on-site Program Supervisor, regardless of the nature of the incident.

### Injuries

In the event of an injury, trained coaches and staff will initiate first aid. For any injury or accident that requires something other than cleaning and covering with a bandage, coaches and parents should seek professional medical assistance through 911. If medical transportation is required, any charges incurred will be the responsibility of the parents and/or the parent's insurance policy. If a participant has a pre-existing medical condition (i.e. allergies, medications, physical impairments, etc.), it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to notify PenMet Parks. This information will be shared with the coach and could be essential to determine the severity of an accident or to assist medical personnel.

## Concussions

Concussion and head injuries are commonly reported injuries from participants in competitive sports contests, games, events, and exhibitions. The risk of catastrophic injuries is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed. PenMet Parks has established concussion protocols and provides education and training to all youth sports staff and volunteers, including coaches, referees, and site supervisors.

Participants and parents will be provided with information regarding the risks associated with concussions or head injuries, including the dangers associated with continuing to participate after a concussion or head injury. We require that participants and parents complete the [PenMet Parks Concussion Information Sheet & Acknowledgement Form](#) annually.

Additional resources are available on our website at [Sports and Fitness Programs - PenMet Parks](#) and at [Sports Concussion Policies and Laws | HEADS UP | CDC Injury Center](#).

## Inclement Weather & Cancellations

It is our intent to get every practice and game in as scheduled, however the safety and well-being of our participants, volunteers, staff, and officials is our top priority. If a game is cancelled due to weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, all efforts will be made to reschedule that game; however, due to time constraints and/or field usage conflicts, some games may not be rescheduled. It will be the decision of PenMet Parks when, and if, the games are rescheduled.

Once a *game* has started, the *game officials* will have the responsibility to remove the players from the field or facility if weather conditions become unsafe. If ordered to do so, please find a safe shelter in an automobile or in a building until instructed to return to the playing field or told that the game has been cancelled. In the event of thunder and lightning, games will be immediately cancelled.

We are aware of the impact that high temperatures can have on outdoor sports. When weather reports indicate an unhealthy heat index or poor air quality, we may cancel practices and games to safeguard players from dehydration and overexposure to sun and heat.

## Behavioral Expectations & Sportsmanship

### Behavioral Expectations & Guidelines

It is our expectation that children and adults will treat one another with respect and kindness. If a child or adult partakes in bullying, name calling, teasing and other unsportsmanlike conduct they will receive one warning. Following that warning they may be asked to leave the field or court. It is at the discretion of the site supervisor to determine the severity of the issue. If the problem continues past a single practice or game, it will be at the discretion of the Youth Sports Coordinator to determine a proper course of action which may include ending the season early for a child or prohibiting an adult from further game and practice attendance.

## Fair Play Concepts

Fair play forms the cornerstone of youth sports, providing the essential principles that shape young athletes' character and cultivate an environment conducive to healthy competition. By embracing values like fairness, honesty, and respect, participants not only enhance their own experiences in sports but also uphold the integrity of youth athletics. *Here are some examples of fair play:*

### Respect for the Other Team

You need the other team. Without the other team, you can't play. So, you need to show respect for other players by treating them as needed partners, not as enemies.

### Respect for Yourself

We know that how people look at things influences what they do. So, if you think of yourself as a good player, as an important part of the team, you are more likely to play like one. Aim to set goals for yourself, practice on your own, and perform well in games.

### Cooperation with Officials

The rules of the game help you play the game better. Fair play means that you follow the rules and cooperate with the referees, who are there to make sure the game is played better.

### Getting Involved

A good player wants to get into the game but also wants others to play. Fair play means you defend the right to play both for yourself and for others.

### Building the Team

To be a good team member, you need to get to know all your teammates and coaches and let them get to know you. We are all different in ability and in skills. Fair play is listening to each other, learning from each other, sharing ideas and feelings, and helping each other increase strengths and reach goals.

### Sticking Up for What You Believe

If you believe in fair play and stick up for it, you will be respected. It means letting others know that you value your teammates, the other team, yourself, and the rules of the game.

## Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge and Responsibilities

I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Coaches' Code of Ethics Pledge:

- ✓ I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- ✓ I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- ✓ I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- ✓ I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- ✓ I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.



- ✓ I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- ✓ I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- ✓ I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
- ✓ I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for children not adults.

### **Enforcement of the Coach's Code of Ethics**

This code of ethics defines the responsibilities for individuals serving as coaches in youth sports and provides the tools to be used by PenMet, when necessary, to check behavior and to protect all children from the psychological, emotional, physical, or social abuses that can be perpetrated against them by youth sport coaches. It is the duty of PenMet Parks to respond to complaints lodged against a coach that has allegedly violated the code of ethics.

### **Complaint Against a Coach Procedures**

When PenMet Parks receives a complaint about a member coach in writing, a review process will be initiated by PenMet Parks staff. Procedurally, the review process includes:

1. Gathering information and documenting eyewitness accounts of the event(s) that took place for everyone involved to determine if a violation of the letter or intent of the Coach's Code of Ethics Pledge has occurred. This may include the site supervisor, game officials, other coaches, parents, and children.
2. PenMet Parks has the authority to determine the severity of the situation and whether or not the affected coach has violated the expected behaviors outlined under the Code of Ethics Pledge.
3. PenMet Parks staff have the authority to enforce the appropriate range of disciplinary action(s).

### **Player's Responsibilities**

Participation in youth sports programs can have a lasting and meaningful effect on children's lives. Therefore, it is the goal of PenMet Parks to provide the highest quality of athletic programs to ensure that a child's experience with sports is a positive one. It takes the cooperation of everyone involved, including the participant, to make this happen. Therefore, PenMet Parks has established the following responsibilities for players:

### **Player's Code of Ethics Pledge**

I hereby pledge to be positive about my youth sports experience and accept responsibility for my participation by following this Players' Code of Ethics Pledge:

- ✓ I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- ✓ I will attend every practice and game that I can and will notify my coach if I cannot.

- ✓ I will expect to receive a fair and equal amount of playing time.
- ✓ I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- ✓ I will treat my coaches, other players, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- ✓ I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will tell my parents or coaches if it stops being fun.
- ✓ I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all sports events.
- ✓ I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team because it is important to me.
- ✓ I will do my very best in school.
- ✓ I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.
- ✓ I will listen to my coach and be respectful of others.
- ✓ I will take care of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms.
- ✓ I will eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water before and after practices and games.
- ✓ I will not taunt or make belittling remarks to my teammates or opponents.
- ✓ I will always show good sportsmanship, win, or lose.
- ✓ I will not make sports a priority over schoolwork or family.
- ✓ I will refrain from horseplay and all other dangerous activities.
- ✓ I will participate for the love of the game and competition and not to win at all costs.

### **Player's Corrective Action Policy**

Players who fail to adhere to the player's code of ethics or do not live up to their responsibilities will be subject to disciplinary action. PenMet Parks does not want disciplinary action to spoil the experience of youth sports for the other children in the program. Therefore, PenMet Parks has instituted a corrective action policy to establish appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

This policy is a guide to assist coaches and PenMet Parks staff to conduct a quality program. The policy is a three-step system designed to give participants the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, but also to firmly address chronic misbehavior. For violations of the code of ethics or responsibilities, the following steps will be followed:

#### **Step 1 – Verbal Warning**

Away from teammates and other parents, the coach will discuss undesirable conduct with player and their parent and stress that the behavior will not be tolerated.

#### **Step 2 – One Game Suspension**

The coach will discuss this issue of the repeated undesirable conduct or the occurrence of the second undesirable conduct with the Youth Sports Coordinator. If the conduct violates the Code of Ethics, the offending player will be benched for a game when he/she should be playing.

#### **Step 3 - League Expulsion**

Coach will discuss the issue of repeated undesirable conduct or the occurrence of undesirable conduct with the Youth Sports Coordinator. The participant on the 3rd offense will be expelled from the league and no refund will be given. The parent will then have to make a formal request to be reinstated into this league or any other PenMet Parks sports program. Both the child and parents will be asked to meet with the Youth Sports Coordinator before reinstatement is considered.

Please note that not all actions carry the same consequences. PenMet Parks reserves the right to enforce any of the three steps depending on the severity of the action. Any action that intentionally harms the safety or well-being of other participants can result in league expulsion regardless of previous behavior.

Coaches have the right reserved to them to immediately stop a game or event or remove a player to end a threat of harm or unsafe condition to any other person. Coaches should report any behavior or dangerous situations that need to be addressed to the Youth Sports Coordinator. Corrective action steps will be documented using PenMet Parks Accident/Incident Form.

### **Parents' Code of Ethics Pledge and Responsibilities**

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Ethics Pledge:

- ✓ I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
- ✓ I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- ✓ I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- ✓ I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- ✓ I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- ✓ I will remember that the game is for the youth.
- ✓ I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- ✓ I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.

### **Parents' Corrective Action Policy**

Parents who do not follow the code of ethics will be subject to this corrective action policy. It is the philosophy of PenMet Parks that parents should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the children. Furthermore, PenMet Parks will never punish a child for the actions of their parent(s). PenMet Parks reserves the right to take whatever remedial measure it believes is appropriate under the circumstances. Although not required, PenMet Parks may use progressive corrective actions when a parent violates the code of ethics. In doing so, it may use the following verbal warnings, written warnings, and game or season suspensions as a means of correcting the problem. In determining



appropriate consequences, PenMet Parks will consider the severity of the issue and the frequency of similar inappropriate conduct by the parent. Corrective action steps will be documented using PenMet Parks Accident/Incident Form.

**Step 1 - Verbal Warning**

The Youth Sports Coordinator will discuss undesirable conduct with parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated.

**Step 2 - Game Suspension**

The Youth Sports Coordinator will ban the parent from attending the next scheduled event.

**Step 3 - Season Suspension**

The parent(s) will be banned from attending a minimum of the remainder of that sports season to a maximum of the next sport season their child participates in. The parent(s) will then have to make a formal request to be reinstated into this league. The parent(s) will then have to meet with the Youth Sports Coordinator prior to the start of the season to determine if the parent(s) is capable of behaving within the spirit of the guidelines of the program.

Thank you for participating in PenMet Parks' youth sports program. It takes the collective effort of players, coaches, and parents alike to create an environment where everyone feels supported and valued. Together, let's continue to support our young athletes as they learn and grow, both on and off the field.