



Warsaw Central School

Warsaw, NY 14569-1295

(585) 786-8000

January 5, 2012

Dear Parent (s) and/or Guardian (s):

I wanted to thank everyone who supported me throughout this trying situation. You exemplify what it truly means to be "family". I will be returning to wrestling in full capacity on January 6th, 2012. In doing this, I wanted to make a few things clear. As a program, our number one concern is the health of the students who were injured during this incident. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families. It is also important that I make clear that if anyone feels that any abuse-physical, mental or otherwise- was ever reported and that nothing was done, you clearly do not know this community, this school, this team, and you surely do not know me. With that said, anyone who knows me knows that this program has always been a community program that strives to teach character. Whether teaching character or wrestling, adversity is oftentimes a better teacher than success. I believe that as we move forward this will be one of those instances.

The boys involved in this incident failed to exercise good character and good judgment. I do not believe that any of these boys meant to hurt anyone, or put the program in jeopardy, yet they did both. I also recognize that as the head coach of this program, their poor judgment is my poor judgment. For this I am sorry; however, I believe this adversity has opened my eyes. With the help of the rest of the coaches on our staff, I will be reassessing the way our practices function, as well as implementing a plan to make sure that all of our athletes learn from the mistakes that were made in the team room that day.

The District and I believe that the best discipline is self-imposed, and students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action only when necessary and to place emphasis on the students' ability to grow in self-discipline. I will impose a stricter format with consequences if poor choices and lack of character arise. This will include stringent start times for practice and more accountability for unexcused tardiness or absences. The wrestling program will continue to stick together. We will be there to support any injured wrestler, and if one of our wrestlers acts inappropriately, it is the philosophy of our program to correct the behavior and rehabilitate them if necessary. We will not disown a family member!

Additionally, I feel compelled to make note that although our reputation as a program has been injured by this incident, along with some sensational journalism, we do not want one tragic situation to tarnish the Warsaw Wrestling program's reputation, and misrepresent what this program is all about. The wrestling family has always, and will continue, to care and give back to their community. In the past the wrestling family has donated to families in need, whether it is giving help and supplies to families in crisis, or hosting car washes to help families with medical finance issues. They have raised more than \$2,000 in charitable donations and gifts given to Carly's Club, Hillside Children's Center, along with running many charitable camps and clinics for wrestlers across New York State.

Lastly, I want to thank the Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Burke, Principal Mr. Swiatek, and our Athletic Director Mr. Stores, for their support of this program and my role as head coach. They have had to take on a difficult task over the last few of weeks in order to make decisions that are best for our kids.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Hirsch', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Hirsch

Head Warsaw Wrestling Coach