

The local Coordinator, on request, will provide a copy of the district's grievance procedure and investigate all complaints in accordance with this procedure.

A copy of each of the Acts and the regulations on which this notice is based may be found in the Civil Rights Coordinator's office.

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Statement of Philosophy

Provided by the Board of Education, the interscholastic athletic program in the Portage Public Schools offers a wide range of voluntary athletic activities to both young men and young women at the middle and senior high school levels. To be able to represent Portage and its schools is a privilege afforded by the Board of Education only to those athletes who have earned the opportunity to do so.

The program has as its main objectives the physical, mental, emotional, and social development of the athlete. To foster these objectives, the Board of Education feels that personal rules of conduct for the athlete are essential. Participants must develop and maintain habits of personal behavior and hygiene that will enable them to perform well, to minimize the risk of personal injury, and to represent themselves in a manner that merits the respect of both the school and the community.

Participation of Athletes in Sports

1. Each student is free to make his/her own selection of the sports in which he/she wishes to participate.
2. Each coach has the right and the responsibility to select his/her own squad personnel and to make substitutions as he/she sees the need.
3. Each coach has the right and responsibility to drop members from his/her squad. Such action may result because of such reasons as: lack of physical, mental or moral fitness; lack of sufficient application to work; lack of cooperation with the team or coach; and failure to observe training rules/regulations.
4. Athletes will be expected to remain a squad member for the full season. When an athlete begins a season and dresses for the first contest in that sport, and then decides to drop that sport, participation will not be allowed in the next sport until completion of the original season. In order to receive an award, athletes shall maintain squad membership even past the last scheduled contest by returning equipment, attending all squad meetings, maintaining Personal Rules of Conduct for Athletes in the Portage Public Schools and attending the Sports Award Program.
5. Coaches in all sports are at liberty to advise and instruct individuals at any time during the year, consistent with regulations of the M.H.S.A.A. and the Portage Public Schools.
6. In a rare case, it may be reasonable and proper to refuse to accept a candidate for a sport. In such instance, the case is to be reviewed by the principal, the athletic director, and the involved coach.

7. If it is necessary for an athlete to be absent from a practice session, he/she must notify his/her coach prior to the practice time.
8. Basic equipment and uniforms for participation in athletics (except for shoes and other personal items) will be provided by the athletic program.

Requirements for Participation

Remember that as an athlete you are not eligible to participate in any sport until the following items have been completed:

1. Physical examination completed and card turned in to the Athletic Office.
2. All eligibility requirements have been satisfied.
3. Emergency treatment release card is on file with trainer.
4. Training regulations contract is on file in the Athletic Office.
5. Insurance information is on file in Athletic Office.
6. Full day of attendance on day of games.

Important Information on Insurance and Athletics

The Portage Public Schools does not provide any type of health or accident insurance for injuries incurred by your child while participating in interscholastic athletics. It is your responsibility to pay, either through insurance coverage or personally, for all medical/surgical expenses related to your son's/daughter's participation in interscholastic athletics.

It is very important that you review your personal health or accident insurance policy for adequate coverage.

The **District requires** that some type of personal insurance be in place for each participant. The coverage levels of such policy are the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. The District offers, through an independent insurance company, an insurance policy that provides minimal coverage should you not have any personal insurance. If you have insurance, you may also want to consider this policy to supplement your own primary health insurance. Contact your Athletic Office for details.

ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

Of a Portage School Athlete

Being a member of a Portage School athletic team is the fulfillment of an early ambition for many students. The attainment of this goal carries with it certain traditions and responsibilities that must be maintained. A great athletic tradition is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over many years. As a member of an interscholastic squad of a Portage School, you have inherited a wonderful tradition, a tradition you are challenged to uphold.

Our tradition has been to win with honor. We desire to win, but only with honor to our athletes, our school, and our community. Such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned. Over many years our squads have achieved more than their share of league and tournament championships. Many individuals have set records and won All-State and All-Conference honors.

It will not be easy to contribute to such a great athletic tradition. To compete for your school may mean that you will have to say "no" to influences an athlete cannot afford. When you wear the colors of your school, we assume that you not only understand our traditions but also are willing to assume the responsibility that goes with them. The contributions you make should be a satisfying accomplishment to you and your family.

To Yourself

The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden yourself and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to get the greatest possible good from your secondary school experiences. Your studies, your participation in other extra/co-curricular activities as well as in sports, prepare you for your life as an adult.

To Your School

Another responsibility you assume as a squad member is to your school. The Portage Public Schools cannot maintain its position of having an outstanding program unless you do your best in whatever activity you wish to engage. By participating in athletics to the maximum of your ability, you are contributing to the reputation of your school.

You assume a leadership role when you are on an athletic squad. The student body and citizens of the community know you. You are on stage with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community, and other communities judge our school by your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute greatly to your school spirit and community pride. Make Portage proud of you and your community proud of your school, by your faithful exemplification of these behaviors.

To Others

As a squad member, you also bear a heavy responsibility to your home. If you never give your parents anything to be ashamed of, you will have measured up to the ideal. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all the training rules, that you have practiced to the best of your ability every day, and that you have played the game "all out", you can keep your self-respect and your family can be justly proud of you.

The youngest students in the Portage Public Schools are watching you. They will copy you in many ways. Set good examples for them so their athletic experiences may have a positive effect on them just as you expect to gain from your participation in athletics.

Specific Responsibilities of Athletes

Athletes are in school first for an education. Moreover, an interscholastic athletic program has a proper place in Portage Public Schools only when it is an educational function. The values of athletics are many. However, it is not always easy to contribute to a great athletic tradition. To compete for one's school may mean having to say "no" to influences that an athlete cannot afford. To get the most out of athletic competition, athletes must be aware of assuming certain responsibilities, namely:

- Striving to achieve sound citizenship and desirable social traits, including emotional control, honesty, cooperation, dependability, and respect for the other person and his/her abilities.
- Maintaining academic and eligibility standards.
- Showing respect for both authority and property.
- Learning to attain physical fitness through good health habits.
- Learning the spirit of hard work and sacrifice.
- Desiring to excel.
- Return of all equipment issued at end of season. [Non-participation at next level if return or restitution has not been made.]

ATHLETIC PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**The Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent is responsible for all athletic activities of the school system. At the discretion of the Superintendent, certain duties related to the administration of the athletic program may be delegated. Mutual cooperation shall be of paramount importance in order to carry out programs that are based on sound educational philosophy.

The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction shall serve as the Superintendent's liaison to the district's high school athletic program. The principals shall report directly to the Assistant Superintendent regarding all issues involved with the administration of the athletic program.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the overall administration, personnel evaluation and supervision of athletic activities for that building, but authority to act may be delegated to another administration representative of the school. The Principal's duties include those delegated by the Superintendent such as compliance with the provisions of this handbook and with the MHSAA handbook.

The Assistant Principal/Athletic Director

The Assistant Principal/Athletic Director acts as the Principal's representative for interscholastic athletic or intramural activities and as liaison between the Principal and coaching staff in matters of policy, philosophy, and assignment of coaching personnel.

The Assistant Principal / Athletic Director shall:

1. Be responsible to the building principal.
2. Supervise and coordinate the interscholastic and/or intramural athletic program.
3. Serve in an advisory and assisting role to the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, secondary principals, and the athletic department.
4. Coordinate such system-wide athletic programs, activities, and related procedures as shall be designated by the building principal within the policies and regulations previously approved by the appropriate authorities.

THE COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES**1. To the Players on the Team**

Coaches should have an understanding of how growth and development occurs in students and incorporate that information in their coaching. They should also recognize the role that athletics has in supporting the educational process of students. The safety and welfare of players should always be uppermost in the coaches' minds.

2. To the School District and Community

Coaches should recognize that they are district representatives and should represent the district in a positive manner. They must constantly strive for excellence in all areas of their school. Coaches must treat the faculty, the players, and the general student body with the same honor and respect that they desire be shown to them. Private, firm, fair, and consistent discipline must be maintained.

The work of coaches must be an integral part of the educational program of the school. Coaches should show mastery of the principles of education and consequent improvement in teaching and coaching.

Coaches should give support to all endorsed activities of the school. At every opportunity coaches should urge the student body to be polite, courteous, and fair to the visiting team.

Coaches have responsibility to the community and parents by keeping parents and players informed of clearly stated expectations for behaviors and rules. Reasonable practice times should be established and clearly communicated to parents or guardians in a timely fashion.

3. **Student/Parental Concerns, Questions, or Complaints**

Concerns, questions, or complaints from an athlete and/or their parent should be directed to the coach of the sport by requesting a meeting with the coach. Issues not satisfactorily resolved, as a consequence of this meeting should be directed to the Athletic Director. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the issue should be directed to each level of administration, as necessary, up to the appropriate central office-level director.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

Being an athlete sets one aside from the rest of the student body. Athletes set the example in many areas of school life. This is particularly important as it relates to the elementary students of our district.

Athletes, on the average, receive higher grades than most other students. This has been proven true for many reasons including an athlete's increased awareness of the importance of school and school activities to his/her life. Students who excel in school activities also excel in the classroom.

Secondary students who want to participate in extra/co-curricular activities will need to meet specific academic standards set by the Board of Education. The academic eligibility standards set by the Board of Education are designed to encourage academic success as well as the development of self-concept, social skills, and citizenship. At both the middle and high school levels, the expectation is for students to pass all classes. [Refer to "Participation in Extra/Co-curricular Activities: Academic Eligibility", page 27]

Regulations governing high school eligibility as established by the Michigan High School Athletic Association apply to Portage Public School athletes by virtue of membership in that organization.

1. ENROLLMENT - To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must be enrolled in a high school not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st semester) or the fourth Friday of February (2nd semester). A student must be enrolled in the school for which he or she competes.
2. AGE - A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contests must be under nineteen (19) years of age, except that a student whose nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year.
3. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS - No student for whom there is not on file in the offices of the superintendent or principal of the school a physician's statement for the current school year, certifying that the student has passed a physical examination and is physically able to compete in athletic practices and contests, shall be eligible to represent that high school.
4. SEMESTERS OF ENROLLMENT - A student who has been enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, for more than eight semesters shall not compete in any branch of athletics. The seventh and eighth semesters must be consecutive.

Enrollment in a school beyond the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st Semester) or fourth Friday of February (2nd Semester), or competing in one or more interscholastic athletic contests, shall be considered as enrollment for a semester under this Rule.

5. SEMESTERS OF COMPETITION - A student, once enrolled in grade nine shall be allowed to compete in only four first semesters and four second semesters.
6. A student shall be limited to participation in only one sports season when that sport, leading to a state championship, is sponsored twice during the school year.
7. UNDERGRADUATE STANDING - A student who is a graduate of a regular four-year high school or who is a graduate of a secondary school that has the same requirements for graduation as a regular four-year high school shall not be eligible for interscholastic athletics. However, a student who satisfactorily completes the required number of credits for graduation in less than eight semesters shall not be barred from interscholastic athletic competition, while passing at least twenty (20) credit hours of undergraduate work, until the end of the eighth semester as far as the provisions of this Section are concerned.
8. PREVIOUS SEMESTER RECORD - No student who does not have to his or her credit on the books of the school represented, at least twenty (20) credit hours of work for the last semester during which he or she shall have been enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, shall compete in any athletic contest during any semester.
9. In determining the number of hours of credit received during a semester under this Rule, the usual credit allowed by the school shall be given. However, reviews and extra-curricular work, and work for which credit previously has been received, shall not be counted. Deficiencies, including incompletes, conditions, and failures from a previous semester may be made up during a subsequent semester, summer session, night school, by correspondence or by tutoring. Eligibility may be reinstated during the next semester when the school accepts the credit.
10. CURRENT SEMESTER RECORD - Academic eligibility checks of not more than ten weeks are required. If a student is not passing at least twenty (20) credit hours when checked, that student is ineligible for competition until the next check but not less than for the next Monday through Sunday. If the next eligibility check reveals the student is still not passing at least twenty (20) credit hours, that student is ineligible for competition for not less than the next Monday through Sunday, and so on until the student is passing twenty (20) credit hours from the start of the semester through the most recent eligibility check. (Portage Public Schools has adopted additional eligibility requirements as outlined elsewhere in the handbook).
11. TRANSFERS - A student transfers from one high school or junior high/middle school to another high school is ineligible to participate in an interscholastic athletic contest for 1 full semester in the school to which the student transfers, or the student qualifies under one or more of the following exceptions:
 - b) A student moves into a new public school district with the persons with whom he or she was living during his or her last school enrollment.
 - c) A student who has not been living with a parent or parents and moves into a new public school district to reside with his or her parents, the single parent if divorced or legally separated, or only living parent who already resides in that district or area.
 - d) A student is a ward of the court or state and is placed in a district or school service area by court order. Guardianship does not fulfill this requirement.
 - e) A foreign exchange student is placed in a district or school service area by a bona fide exchange program (as determined by the MHSAA).

- f) A student marries and establishes a new residence in a new district or school service area.
- g) A student transfers to another school because his or her school ceases to operate.
- h) A student in attendance at a school designated by the governing body of that school as the result of reorganization, consolidation or annexation, or at the public school in the district where he or she resides.
- i) A student from divorced or legally separated parents moves from one district into a new school district with or to one of those parents and the principal of each of the two schools involved signs the Education Transfer Form which certifies the reason for the move as it relates to the divorced/ separated parents. The transfer is permitted under this exception one time and must be approved by the Executive Director before the student competes in interscholastic athletic competition.
- j) A student is transferred within a school system, for other than athletic purposes, as a result of the initiative and order of the Board of Education or the governing body of a private or parochial school system.
- k) A student enters in the ninth grade of a four-year high school and has not been previously enrolled in the ninth grade.
- l) A student completes the last grade available in the school system previously attended.
- m) A student eighteen (18) years or older moves out of the school district or service area of the school he or she previously attended and into a new district or service area, without being accompanied by a parent or parents, and both principals sign the Educational Transfer Form certifying the transfer is in the best educational interest of the student. The transfer is permitted under this exception one time and must be approved by the Executive Director before the student competes in interscholastic athletic competition.
- n) A student becomes a bona fide boarding student of a boarding school, as defined in the school code, and the principal of each of the two schools involved signs the Educational Transfer Form. The transfer is permitted one time and must be approved by the Executive Director before the student competes in interscholastic athletic competition.
- o) A full semester is defined under this Regulation as one in which a transfer occurred not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st Semester) or the fourth Friday of February (2nd Semester), or 90 school days from the date of enrollment in the receiving school for those requests approved by the Executive Committee.
- p) The use of undue influence for athletic purposes by any person or persons directly or indirectly associated with the school to secure or encourage the attendance of a student or the student's parents or guardians as residents of the school district, shall cause the student to become ineligible for a minimum of one semester and a maximum of one year. The offending school shall be placed on probation for one year and offending coach or coaches not be permitted to coach for a one year period.

- q) A student whose name has been entered into an MHSAA meet or tournament is not eligible during the meet or tournament in the same sport in the same season at a second school, even if the student completes an otherwise legal transfer to the second school. In football, a student may not change schools after the sixth playing date that season and become eligible to compete in the football play-offs at the second school.
12. AWARDS - A student may accept, for participation in athletics, a symbolic or merchandise award that does not have a value or cost in excess of \$25.00.
 13. Awards for athletic participation in the form of cash, merchandise certificates, or any other type of negotiable documents are never allowed.
 14. Banquets, luncheons, dinners, trips, and fees or admissions to camps or events, if accepted in kind, are permitted under this Regulation.
 15. A student shall be ineligible under this Regulation if he/she accepts awards in violation of its provisions only in the following activities: Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, (11-man, 8-man, or 6-man), Golf, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, Skiing, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, or Wrestling.
 16. A student violating this Regulation shall be ineligible for interscholastic competition for a period of not less than one full semester from the date of the student's last violation.
 17. A full semester is defined under this Regulation as one in which a violation occurs not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day in the first semester, and the fourth Friday of February in the second semester. If the violation occurs after either date a student is ineligible for the balance of that semester and the succeeding semester.
 18. AMATEUR PRACTICES - No student shall be eligible to represent his or her high school who: (1) has received money or other valuable consideration from any source for participating in athletics, sports, or games listed in Section B; (2) has received money or other valuable consideration for officiating in interscholastic athletic contests; or (3) has signed a professional athletic contract.
 19. A student shall be ineligible under this Regulation if he or she violates its amateur provisions only in the following activities: Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football (11-man, 8-man or 6-man), Golf, Gymnastics, Ice Hockey, Skiing, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track, Volleyball, or Wrestling.
 20. A student ineligible under this Regulation may not apply for reinstatement until the equivalent of one full school year of enrollment has elapsed following the date of his or her last violation.
 21. LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP - A student who, after practicing with or participating in an athletic contest or scrimmage as a member of a high school athletic team, participates in any athletic competition not sponsored by his or her school in the same sport during the same season, shall become ineligible for a minimum of the next three (3) contests/days of competition and maximum of the remainder of that school year. The following exceptions to this Regulation will apply:
 - a) Ice hockey and all individual sports will apply the limited team membership rule from the point of a student's first participation in a contest or scrimmage, rather than practice.

- b) During a season an individual may participate in a maximum of two (2) individual sports meets or contests in that sport while not representing his or her school.
 - i) Points earned, weight established, times or records established shall not count toward any qualifying requirements for MHSAA meets or tournaments.
 - ii) Meets or tournaments entered under the above provisions shall not affect the number of games, contests, or days of competition specified for each school team and individual under Regulation II, Sections 10 and 11 of the *MHSAA Handbook, 2004-2005*.
- c) A student shall not compete at any time in any sport under MHSAA jurisdiction in any of the following events:
 - i) "All-Star" contests, regardless of the method of selection.
 - ii) "All-Star" fund-raising events or similar exhibitions if they involve contestants other than the student's school.
 - iii) Any event that is or purports to be a national high school championship, or the qualification thereto. Participation in such a contest by a high school student shall cause that student to become ineligible for all interscholastic athletics for a maximum period of one year of school enrollment from the date of the athlete's last violation of this Regulation.
- d) A student may participate as an individual at any time without loss of interscholastic eligibility:
 - i) As a member of a National Team, which is defined as one selected by the National Governing Body of the sport on a national qualification basis either through a defined selective process or actual tryouts for the purpose of international competition which requires the entries to officially represent their respective nations, although it is not necessary there be team scoring by nation; or
 - ii) In an Olympic Development Program, which is defined as one funded by the United States Olympic Committee and conducted or authorized by the National Governing Body of the sport involved.

Any inquiry related to Eligibility Standards will be heard by the building principal and/or the Athletic Director.

Conduct of an Athlete

The conduct of any athlete is closely observed in many areas of life. It is important that your behavior be above reproach in all of the following areas:

1. ON THE FIELD - In the area of athletic competition, a real athlete does not use profanity or illegal tactics, and learns fast that losing is part of the game and that you should be gracious in defeat and modest in victory. It is always courteous to congratulate the opponent on a well-played game after the contest, whether in defeat or victory.

2. **IN THE CLASSROOM** - In the academic area, a good athlete becomes a good student. As an athlete, you must plan your schedule so that you give sufficient time and energy to your studies to insure acceptable grades.

In addition to maintaining good scholarship, an athlete should give respectful attention to classroom activities and show respect for the students and faculty at all times. Horseplay and unnecessary boisterousness are not acceptable habits of behavior.

A healthy athlete should have a good attendance record. Never cut classes or school!

GROOMING AND DRESS POLICY

A member of an athletic team is expected to be well groomed. Appearance, expression and actions always influence people's opinions of athletes, the team and the school. Once a student has volunteered to be a member of a squad, he/she has made a choice to uphold certain standards expected of athletes in this community.

In order to further good sportsmanship, maintain good health habits, good performance, respect for rules and authority; establish leadership, team pride and discipline; eliminate disruptive influences, disturbances in the locker rooms, and the practice fields and gymnasiums or trips, the following grooming and dress rules will be adhered to by team members:

1. Only uniforms issued by the Athletic Department will be permitted to be worn for contests.
2. An athlete shall dress presentably at all times: on trips, at assemblies or at banquets.
3. The wearing or taking of Portage athletic uniforms and/or equipment without permission of the school authorities is not permitted.

OTHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

1. **ATHLETES WILL BE EXPECTED TO REMAIN A SQUAD MEMBER FOR THE FULL SEASON.** – When an athlete begins a season and dresses for the first contest in that sport, and then decides to drop that sport, participation will not be allowed in the next sport until completion of the original season. In order to receive an award, athletes shall maintain squad membership even past the last scheduled contest by returning equipment, attending all squad meetings, maintaining Basic Training Rules of Conduct for Athletes in the Portage Public Schools, and attending the Sports Award Program.
2. **EQUIPMENT** – School equipment checked out by the student athlete is his/her responsibility. He/she is expected to keep it clean and in good condition. Loss of any equipment is the athlete's financial obligation. Athletes are to wear only department-approved equipment.
3. **MISSING PRACTICE** – An athlete should always consult his/her coach before missing practice. Missing practice or a game without good reason will be dealt with severely. Sudden illness or some other emergency would be a good reason for missing practice or a game.
4. **TRAVEL** – All athletes must travel to and from out-of-town athletic contests in transportation provided by the Athletic Department unless the coach grants specific permission. Athletes will remain with their squad and under the supervision of a coach when attending away contests. All regular school bus rules will be followed

when applicable including: (a) food, (b) noise, (c) remaining in seats, and (d) care and respect for equipment. Always dress appropriately and in good taste.

5. COLLEGE RECRUITMENT POLICY – In the event an athlete should be contacted personally by a college recruiter, he/she has an obligation to work through his/her coach and the Athletic Department. Inform your coach of such a contact as soon as possible.
6. CONFLICTS IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – An individual student who attempts to participate in too many extra-curricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict of obligations. The Portage Public Schools offers the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extra/co-curricular activities. And to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner so as to minimize conflicts.

Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous conflicts. This would include being cautious about belonging to too many activities where conflicts are bound to happen. It also means notifying the faculty sponsors involved immediately when a conflict does arise. Activities that are required as part of the curriculum take precedence without athletic consequence.
7. An athlete must work to his/her academic potential in his/her academic subjects. He/she must also display good school citizenship at all times. Disciplinary action taken by the school may be supplemented by additional disciplinary action by the Athletic Department.
8. An athlete shall not participate in athletic practices on the day he/she has been absent from any class without just reason and/or prior approval. If an athlete is too ill to attend class, he/she is too ill to participate in athletics. It is expected that students attend at least four (4) classes in order to participate in after-school practices scheduled on that date.
9. SUNDAY PRACTICES – Sunday practices should not be held for any sport.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Committed is defined as the affirmative action by a student to become an athlete by virtue of going out for a sport. The date of commitment shall be deemed to be that of the first practice of the season of the first sport in which a student participates. Once an athlete has committed himself/herself to a particular sport, the athlete shall be considered to be committed for the balance of his/her high school years and shall be required to adhere to all rules and regulations pertaining to athletics.
2. Ineligibility is defined as being rendered unable to participate in the athletic competition for a specified or indefinite period of time.