

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK**

Wear the red and gray with pride

### ***It is an honor to represent Cuyahoga Heights Schools.***

The Cuyahoga Heights Redskins athletic teams have earned the respect of schools far and wide. The Cuyahoga Heights Schools are dedicated to the concept of the student-athlete. Students, coaches and athletes must remember that academics need to be the student-athlete's priority. Cuyahoga Heights Schools are committed to providing a strong athletic program to support our challenging academic program. In addition, the talent and integrity of our coaches and the skills and sportsmanship displayed by each athlete who wears a CHS uniform contribute to this solid reputation.

### ***Becoming a Cuyahoga Heights athlete requires responsibility.***

Every student who participates as part of an athletic team must uphold these high ideals. In order for teams to be successful, each athlete must work to his or her best ability. This takes time, dedication and commitment. Every student athlete is bound not only by the Student Code of Conduct but also by the expectations outlined in this handbook.

### ***Becoming a teammate is a rewarding experience.***

Working with teammates to reach a common goal is a valuable life experience. Learning how to accept – with humility – the joy of victory is as important as facing defeat with dignity. These are life lessons.

### ***Good Luck to all of our coaches and athletes this year!***

We wish all of our athletes and team competitors a successful season. Work to become the best you can be. Play to the best of your ability. Respect yourself and demonstrate your respect for our school, your coaches, teammates and opponents.

## **GUIDELINES**

Participation in the athletics programs at Cuyahoga Heights Schools is a privilege. All participants must adhere to these Guidelines.

### **1. PURPOSES**

The athletic programs at CHS are designed to:

- help our student-athletes gain an appreciation for the responsibilities associated with being part of a team.
- provide opportunities to learn the importance of commitment, sacrifice, trust, hard work, perseverance, and good sportsmanship.
- teach student-athletes how to prepare like champions.
- provide a platform for student-athletes to develop individual skills as they benefit the team.

### **2. RULES**

Athletes are expected to:

- follow the rules and procedures set forth in this Student Athlete Handbook.
- follow rules and procedures specific to the individual team.
- follow school rules set forth in the Student Code of Conduct.
- follow rules of the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

### **3. SPORTSMANSHIP**

Athletes as well as parents and other spectators should be conscious of their responsibility for establishing and maintaining commendable school practices and honorable conduct.

- Treat athletic opponents and officials as guests.
- Respect the authority, judgment and decisions of the coach and all officials.
- Respect our teammates and opponents at all times.
- Support the cheerleaders.
- Accept the officials' decisions as final.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Come to have fun and to support the team. Booning, stamping on bleachers, jeering, and other poor conduct are unacceptable practices.

#### **4. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

- All athletes/cheerleaders must have on file a complete OHSAA physical examination form signed by the student, a parent/guardian, and a physician before they can participate in practices and competition. These examinations are valid for one year.
- All athletes/cheerleaders must have an Insurance Waiver signed by the parent/guardian indicating that the student has medical insurance, or must purchase school insurance.
- Student athletes must complete, sign and return the **Guideline for Student Athlete Form**.
- All athletes/cheerleaders must return all equipment or pay the replacement cost at the end of the season. Students may not participate in another sport until this obligation is cleared.
- Students may be denied participation or removed from an athletic team because of academic ineligibility (see Section 5).
- Students may also be denied participation or removed from an athletic team for misbehavior. The decision to deny participation may be appealed to administration.

#### **5. ELIGIBILITY**

**High School**—must pass 5 credits the preceding grading period in order to be eligible to play (OHSAA rule). In addition, an athlete must have a 1.5 grade point average (Cuyahoga Heights policy.)

**Middle School**—All 7th graders are eligible for the fall season per the OHSAA. According to the Ohio High School Athletic policy, to be eligible, a student-athlete must be currently enrolled in a member school and have received passing grades in a minimum of five of all subjects in which enrolled the immediately preceding grading period.

**Academic Improvement Program** – Middle school students ineligible by CHS standards must participate in the study table program. High school students who are ineligible by CHS standards must document 90 minutes per week of tutoring or supervised study.

**Note:** Students who are eligible by OHSAA rules but ineligible by CHS policy (1.5 grade point average) may continue to compete by participating in the Academic Improvement Program. Students should contact the Athletic Office for details.

#### **6. TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

Students who participate in school-sponsored activities at a location other than the Cuyahoga Heights Schools campus shall be transported to and from the activity by the transportation provided by the school system. Students are permitted to drive themselves to practice or a home game if the facility is off the campus. Students may not transport another student to the practice or home game. After an off-campus practice/home game, students will not be transported back to the school. Special exceptions must be approved in advance by an administrator.

- The coach or advisor may grant exceptions for injury, illness or other good reason, with a parent's permission (in writing or in person).

- The co-curricular director or principal may grant permission for alternate transportation when there is a conflict with another school activity or other exception.
- A Transportation Request form should be completed and signed by the parent the day before the requested exception.

When parents pick up students at the school after an event, the pick-up point is behind the high school.

## **7. ATTITUDE**

- Display a positive attitude at all times.
- Practice good sportsmanship as you represent our community, our school, our teams, and yourself.
- Support all of our athletic programs by encouraging student-athletes in other sports and attending competitions of other programs

## **8. COMMITMENT AND EFFORT**

Put the interests of the team first by:

- considering the effect on the team before making decisions.
- abiding by the decisions of the coach.
- attending each practice and arriving on time.
- encouraging and supporting teammates.
- foregoing participation in other activities that would compromise your training for the sport in which you are participating.
- fulfilling the commitment to the team until the end of the season. Give your best effort at practice, at competition, and in the classroom.

## **9. HAZING AND HARASSMENT**

The practice of hazing—defined as committing an act of initiation into a group, or coercing others to commit such an act, that causes mental or physical harm or personal degradation—will not be tolerated at Cuyahoga Heights Schools.

The practice of harassment—defined as any act, gesture, or comment that degrades an individual or creates an intimidating situation—is an unacceptable practice and will not be tolerated.

Victims of any hazing/harassment incident should immediately report the abuse to their coach, co-curricular director or any school personnel. Any student or group of students involved in hazing and/or harassment will be subject to school and team discipline, which may include suspension from the team or school and possible dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season. (See Student Code of Conduct.)

## **10. ALCOHOL, DRUGS, TOBACCO**

The rules that follow are in addition to the adopted Code of Conduct in the Cuyahoga Heights School handbook. The administration can assess further action when it is deemed necessary.

- The use or possession of tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco, etc.) is absolutely forbidden.
- Any misuse of a prescription or non-prescription drugs is prohibited. (Please refer to the Medication Policy in the Student Handbook)
- Any use or possession of illegal drugs (narcotic, hallucinogenic, intoxicant, and counterfeit, look-alike, designer), anabolic steroid, controlled substance, inhalant or alcohol by a Cuyahoga Heights student is absolutely forbidden.

- The sale or distribution of any illegal or prescription drugs will result in dismissal from any co-curricular or athletic program for one year beginning with the date of the violation.
- Hosting parties where drugs and/or alcohol are present will be viewed as equivalent to the distribution or sale of alcohol, drugs, etc. and will receive the same discipline.
- If any student - in his/her middle school and/or high school years - is found in violation of this rule by any school personnel or law enforcement agency, in or out of season, during the summer or on or off campus (see Section 4), the disciplinary actions listed below will result.
- For the penalties listed below, if an athlete does not complete the season in good standing after serving their punishment, the punishment served during that season will not count.

**First Offense:** Suspension from 25% of the season's contests.

- Penalty applies to the current season and may be carried over to the next season if necessary.
- If the infraction occurs during the summer or between seasons, the penalty applies to the athlete's next completed season.
- If the 25% mark is not reached during the regular season, then the penalty carries over to the tournament/post-season or the athlete's next completed season's sport.
- The student's return to participation is based on successful continuation or completion of a drug/alcohol education program approved by the administration at the expense of the parents.

**Second Offense:** Suspension from 50% of the season's contests.

- Penalty applies to the current season and may be carried over to the next season if necessary.
- If the infraction occurs during the summer or between seasons, the penalty applies to the athlete's next completed season's sport.
- If the 50% mark is not reached during the regular season, then the penalty carries over to the tournament/post-season or the athlete's next completed season's sport.
- The student will be referred for alcohol/drug assessment and counseling, if prescribed. The student's return to participation is based on successful continuation or completion of the approved alcohol/drug rehabilitation program at the expense of the parents.
- The student will be placed on probation for the remainder of the school year. (See Section 12)

**Third Offense:** Suspension from all athletic activities for one year.

- The student must enroll in an alcohol/drug assessment and counseling program as approved by the administration at the expense of the parents.
- The student will be placed on probation for one year beginning with the date of the violation.
- The student's return to participation is based on successful continuation or completion of a drug/alcohol education program approved by the administration at the expense of the parents.
- The student and parents must sign a contract indicating that one more violation of this code will result in his/her permanent removal from all athletic programs for the remainder of his/her high school career.

A student who voluntarily seeks help, prior to being caught, may be excused from 50% of the full imposition of the stated discipline, provided that the student is enrolled in a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program approved by the administration at the expense of the parents.

## **11. HOSTING PARTIES**

Student-athletes who host parties where drugs and/or alcohol are present receive the same discipline as in the distribution or sale of. The student athlete who hosts the party will not be disciplined if he/she immediately (1) asks the individual(s) who brought the drugs or alcohol to leave, (2) calls the police, and (3) calls or informs parents. Student-athletes who follow this procedure will not be viewed as distributors of drugs and/or alcohol.

## **12. PROBATION**

Any student participating in the athletic program who is found guilty of conduct detrimental to the co-curricular program or who has received a Level II or III suspension as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct will be put on probation for one year. During that probationary period, any further disciplinary problem brought to the attention of the co-curricular director or building principal may result in a loss of participation for up to one year.

## **13. INJURED ATHLETES**

A player injured during a practice, game or outside of school must report the injury to the head coach before going to the trainer. Injured athletes are considered a part of the team and should confer with their coach regarding rehabilitation and their role as an injured player on the team. An athlete must have the approval of both the coach and the trainer before returning to participation. A doctor's release may be required.

## **14. SAFETY**

Athletes must contribute to a safe environment for themselves and their teammates by:

- using only those techniques that have been taught or authorized by the coaching staff.
- practicing only under the supervision of a coach.
- being where you are supposed to be and on time.

## **15. CHANGING SPORTS**

Students who become members of a team at the start of a season may or may not switch to another sport within the season, depending on the student's grade classification:

- 7th or 8th graders—may change from one sport to another at any time prior to the first event, with the agreement of coaches, parents, and the athlete. 9th – 12th graders—may change from one sport to another in the same season before equipment is issued.
- Athletes, regardless of grade, may not change from one sport to another when disciplinary measures, unsportsmanlike conduct, or another major difficulty have been the reason for dismissal from a team.
- Athletes may not start a new season sport until all equipment from the previous season has been returned to the appropriate coach.
- Athletes who voluntarily or involuntarily drop from an athletic team cannot begin practice or conditioning for the next season's sport until the previous season has ended (determined by the date team equipment is collected).

## **16. ATTENDANCE**

Students participating in after-school or evening activities must be in attendance at least one-half of the school day on the day of the event. They must report to school before 11:00 a.m. and cannot leave school before 11:00 a.m. Only the principal or co-curricular director may excuse a student from this requirement for a family funeral or other special circumstance.

Students suspended out of school are not permitted to attend or participate in any co-curricular activities that are scheduled during the suspension period.

## **17. SHARED ATHLETES**

The Shared Athlete policy outlines the procedures to be followed when a student is identified as an extraordinary athlete or when low team numbers dictate. It allows for a student to participate in no more than two varsity sports in the same season. Not all sports lend themselves to this program. Student-athletes must discuss this with both head coaches well before the season starts. The Shared Athlete Contract must be signed by the athlete and the head coach of each sport and approved by the co-curricular director before the athlete is issued equipment and permitted to participate.

## **18. CONFLICTS WITH OTHER ACTIVITIES**

A Shared Athlete contract with specific guidelines needs to be developed by the coach and advisor for non-athletic activities that involve regular practices outside of the school day, and/or major performances or competitions. When activity conflicts occur, the student should notify the advisors, directors or coaches of the conflicting activities as soon as possible so the staff can meet and arrive at a solution in everyone's best interest. Whenever possible, staff discussions should include the following prioritization:

- State level activity
- Regional level activity
- District level activity
- Conference level activity
- Building level activity
- Practice, rehearsal, etc.

Final conflict resolution rests with administration in consultation with the staff.

## **19. ATHLETE-COACH COMMUNICATION**

Athletes should communicate immediately with the coach regarding the following:

- Injuries
- Schedule conflicts
- Concerns related to individual development
- Concerns related to playing time

## **20. PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION**

Communication parents should expect from the coach:

- When and where practices and contests are to be held.
- Coach's philosophy and team rules
- Expectations for all team athletes
- Fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning, lettering requirements, etc.
- Injuries
- Disciplinary actions that might result in denial of participation
- Eligibility requirements

Appropriate parental concerns to discuss with coaches:

- Treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Skill improvement and development
- Concerns about your child's behavior
- Academic progress
- Team goals and coaching philosophy

Inappropriate topics:

- Play calling
- Other team members

#### Communication coaches expect from parents:

- Schedule conflicts, well in advance (e.g. vacations, family reasons)
- Support and commitment to the program
- Strategies that have worked for the parents in dealing with the student-athlete (e.g. motivation, responsibility)
- Mandatory attendance at pre-season parent meeting
- Complete, sign and return all necessary forms (insurance, emergency, participation, etc)

#### Procedures for coach-parent discussion:

- Make an appointment with the coach
- If you cannot reach the coach, call the co-curricular director to set up a meeting.
- Avoid confronting a coach before, during or following a contest or practice, as these can be emotional times for all.
- If the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, call the co-curricular director to discuss the situation and determine next steps.

### **21. PARENT/FANS RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents and fans at home or away contests are to act in an appropriate manner. No parent or fan should be interacting inappropriately towards officials, staff or players during a contest. Be positive. Parents or fans may be held accountable for their inappropriate actions through game suspensions, season suspensions or yearly suspensions.

### **22. AWARDS**

Lettering requirements for each sport are described in the individual team's rules. The following system will be followed in issuing Board approved athletic awards:

- 7th-8th Grades – Participation certificate
- 9th Grade – Class numerals and participation certificate or letter
- 1st Varsity award – CH letter, sport insert, and first varsity award certificate
- 2nd Varsity award – 2nd varsity award certificate
- 3rd Varsity award – 3rd varsity award certificate
- 4th Varsity award – Plaque
- Senior - Senior Picture in uniform

A 12-sport award is given to any senior who has received a participation award or letter in a sport every season of his/her high school career. To be eligible, athletes must complete the season in good standing.

### **23. APPEALS PROCESS**

Any student athlete who is denied participation for disciplinary violations may appeal the decision to the Faculty Review Board (FRB). The Faculty Review Board shall consist of the co-curricular director, a neutral head coach/advisor appointed by the principal, a principal or administrator not involved in the original case and one other faculty member appointed by the principal. Any student seeking an appeal hearing must notify the co-curricular director within 24 hours of the disciplinary action. The student's parent/guardian must be present for this hearing. The FRB shall review the case and communicate their decision to the parents within 24 hours of the hearing. The decision of the Faculty Review Board is final.