

SUFFIELD INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC PROGRAM



PARENT & STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK
SUFFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETICS

Mission Statement: The Suffield Department of Athletics strives for excellence by providing student-athletes with a broad, comprehensive program that will allow students to develop an appreciation for integrity, discipline, teamwork and sportsmanship in the competitive venue of their choosing as they develop the skills necessary to reach a meaningful standard of athletic performance and community citizenship.

The primary goal of the Suffield High School athletic program is to promote the growth and development of its participants. By taking an active role in sports, student athletes will benefit physically and emotionally becoming their best selves. The athletic program is an integral part of the overall school program and is open to all students. Participation in after school athletics is voluntary and should be considered a privilege. Participants agree to be held to a higher academic and moral standard. The student athlete must be willing to accept the sacrifices that accompany upholding team rules, training requirements, and meetings.

While the high school athletic program serves as an arena for the student athlete to display his/her talent, student athletes must, in turn, be willing to assume certain responsibilities. In addition to regular “rules and regulations” for students in High school, participants are also governed by the policies of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and North Central Connecticut Conference (NCCC) (or the governing body for non-CIAC sports.)

SUFFIELD HIGH SCHOOL - GOALS

1. To encourage student-athletes to achieve success by maintaining academic eligibility rules and to keep athletics in proper perspective.
2. To provide an opportunity to exemplify and observe good sportsmanship.
3. To maintain a high standard of credible and positive performance and conduct on and off the field.
4. To teach and emphasize the fundamental skills of the various sports as a necessary ingredient in achieving individual and team success.
5. To stress the importance of physical fitness, conditioning, health habits, and safety in athletics.
6. To provide opportunities to develop lasting friendships with teammates and opponents.
7. To teach athletes to work together as a cohesive unit in order to achieve a common goal.
8. To provide a well-planned and well-balanced program of interscholastic athletics for as many school students as possible.
9. To provide high quality leadership for all athletic programs so as to exemplify to student's a desired behavior to be developed from each athletic program.
10. To provide opportunities for the development of a feeling of unity and belonging, team pride, teamwork and commitment.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

I. General Regulations

A. Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference and Suffield High School rules must be followed in all cases of eligibility, transfer, physical examinations, insurance coverage, starting dates, use of school equipment, etc. Each coach has the responsibility to know, to inform team members and parents and to enforce school and CIAC regulations in these matters in or out of season.

B. Any civil law infraction or conduct (an athlete's work habits or conduct both in and out of school are such as to make you unworthy to represent the ideals, principles, and standards of your school) by a student athlete that is determined by the head coach and/or school administration to be detrimental to the team, athletic program, school, or school district will result in counseling by the head coach and/or Athletic Director/ School Administrator, and possible suspension from the team, school or both. Multiple civil law infractions or behaviors outside of school that are determined unbecoming of a Suffield athlete may result in suspension for the rest of the season.

C. Prior to the opening of each season, athletes will be allowed to transfer registration from one sport to another only on mutual agreement of the two coaches involved. Athlete must report to Athletic Department to make the switch. No athlete may quit one sport and participate in another sport after the first contest date as established by the CIAC.

D. Athletes must travel to and from contests away from Suffield in transportation provided by the school.

The only exceptions are:

1. Injury to a participant which would require alternate transportation.
2. Prior arrangement between the participant's parent/guardian and coach for alternative transportation, with approval from the athletic director.

E. A display of unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opponent or official, or use of profanity during a practice or contest toward an opponent, official, or coach will result in counseling and may result in disciplinary action and possible suspension from the current team * by the head coach, athletic director and/or principal. Multiple infractions may result in suspension for the rest of the season. *If in the case of the display of unsportsmanlike conduct occurring during the last game/practice of the season, disciplinary action may be taken in the athletes next athletic season.

F. Excused absence from scheduled practice/game:

1. Illness
2. Death in family
3. Court
4. College visitations (practice only)
5. Other reasons approved by coach, AD, or principal/designee
6. CIAC/CHSCA sponsored activities

G. Family scheduled school vacations causing students to miss practices/games: Varsity athletes are not excused during vacation periods except with prior approval of coach, AD, or principal/designee.

H. Unexcused absence* from scheduled practice/game will result in:

1. Suspension from next contest following the first/second violation.
2. Suspension for remainder of the season following the third.
3. If practice/game is the last of the season, loss of award may be invoked for failure to finish season.

* absences due to disciplinary detentions or internal suspensions qualify as unexcused absences.

I. Theft or malicious destruction of any school or individual private property during regular or out of school hours.

1. First offense: Suspension from next contest following the violation.
2. Second offense: Suspension for the remainder of the sports season and a referral of the student to the principal/designee.
3. Serious infractions even if the first offense will be referred to the principal/designee for disciplinary action and possible prosecution.

J. Students not returning uniforms will not be allowed to try out for the next season/or another sport during the year until payment or return of same.

K. Completion of the sports season is required in order for the student to be eligible for letter or other team or individual awards. (Exception: injury which limits participation.) No awards shall be given to any student suspended for the remainder of the season for Athletic Code violation.

L. Valuables: Money and valuables must be secured in lockers provided in the respective locker room areas or left with the coaches. **NO RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY LOST MONEY OR VALUABLES**. Locker rooms are open at all times and are shared by many groups. A video surveillance system is in place at Suffield High School to assist in the monitoring of the school grounds.

II. School Attendance Requirements

A. Students must be present in school for at least 3.5 hours of their scheduled day in order to participate in an activity that day. An exception may be made if the student has an approved medical appointment or prior approval from the athletic director/administration.

B. If the student is absent the last school day of the week, and the competition is on a non-school day, the student must bring to the coach a signed statement from the parent that permission is given to participate.

C. A student who has been injured and has had medical treatment cannot participate again until the date indicated by the student's physician.

D. Students on internal or external suspension are not allowed to practice or participate in a game that day or attend any extracurricular event.

III. Chemical Health Policy and Regulations

Use or possession, transmission, being under the influence of, or in the presence of alcohol (i.e. underage use or possession) stimulants, street drugs (including but not limited to marijuana, heroin, nicotine, K2 and cocaine) by an athletic program participant is prohibited.

A. First offense: the individual will be suspended from the squad for five (5) school days by the Athletic Director and/or an Administrator. At the end of this period, following counseling, by the head coach and athletic director, a decision regarding further competition will be made.

B. Second offense: Suspension for the remainder of the season (and all other athletic events for the year) and referral of the student to the principal/designee.

C. Any player, while under direct supervision of the coach, using or possessing alcoholic beverages or other drugs (controlled substances) will be suspended for the remainder of the season and faces disciplinary action by the school administration.

D. All other school rules shall also apply.

IV. Before any "suspension from a team" provided for under these rules shall take effect, the student-athlete is referred to the coach or athletic director, and a school administrator. The principal or designee holds a due process hearing.

A. The student-athlete is informed of the charges

B. The student-athlete is given an opportunity to tell his/her side of the story.

C. The principal or athletic director will make a decision within a reasonable period of time.

D. The student-athlete and parent/guardian will be notified of the decision in writing.

V. The rules and regulations in this code shall apply to any violations during the season of participation.

VI. Appeal Procedure

If the decision of the High School Principal is not satisfactory to the parties involved, they shall have the right of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools. Requests for such an appeal shall be made in writing to the Superintendent. Within five school days of being notified of any appeal, the Superintendent will review the issues presented and render a written decision to the parties involved, stating the reason or reasons for his or her decision.

HAZING

Hazing or the rites of initiation of an athlete to an athletic team will not be tolerated to any degree. Students in violation of these policies will be suspended from the squad for 5 (five) school days or dismissed from the team, depending on the severity of the incident

CAPTAIN SELECTION

1. The coach will make the final decision on captains. A coach may ask for team input during the process.
2. Captains are not official until the sports season begins.
3. The captain position is reserved for senior athletes who have been with the program for at least two years; a junior can be selected if he/she has exceptional leadership skills.

CAPTAIN'S REQUIREMENTS

The captain of any sport at Suffield High School will:

1. Adhere to all policies, rules and regulations of the Suffield High School District
2. Adhere to the rules set forth by the coach and coaching staff
3. Conduct himself/herself in an exemplary manner with high standards of conduct, citizenship and sportsmanship
4. Refrain from unacceptable conduct such as, but not limited to, any violation of the law, use or being in the presence of drugs, alcohol. The use of tobacco is also prohibited.
5. Understand that the position of Captain is not just an honor but a privilege. This honor will require the utmost leadership and an active understanding that the captain is a role model for other team members. Failure to adhere to the captain's requirements, athletic department/team rules and regulations will lead to the dismissal of a captain. The captaincy can also be lost during the season for violation of any of the above requirements at the discretion of the coach or Athletic Director.
6. Be in compliance with all CIAC rules and regulations.

Rules and Regulations: Selection of team members is subject to the discretion of the coaching staff. Time, space, facilities, equipment, coaching preference, and other factors will place limitations on maximum team size. While every attempt will be made to involve as many student athletes as possible, the number of interested students may exceed our ability to safely and effectively accommodate them; therefore, a selection process may be necessary. Student-athletes and their parents are encouraged to attend season meetings prior to the first game to receive information directly from each sport's coaching staff about each particular sport. Those dates will be posted on the athletic website.

Communication and Conflict Resolution: Involvement in interscholastic athletics can be a highly emotional and time-consuming activity. Because of the competitive and selective nature of a sports program, there are times when conflicts and issues between a student athlete and his/her coach may arise. It is imperative that any conflict and/or issue be addressed immediately and as directly as possible so that it can be resolved promptly. **Every effort should be made to resolve all issues at the lowest possible level.** Issues and concerns are best resolved through person-to-person discussions

Steps for Conflict Resolution

1. Student athlete contacts coach to discuss and resolve the issue
2. Parent/Guardian of athlete contacts coach to discuss and resolve the issue. It is recommended that the student-athlete be involved in the conversation.

In order for the discussion between the parent/guardian and the coach to be productive, the following times to approach a coach should be avoided:

- Either prior to or immediately following a game
 - During a practice session
 - During a time when other teammates are present
 - A time when it is apparent there will not be sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion
 - A time when it is apparent there will not be sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion
3. Student athlete and/or parent/guardian contacts the Athletic Director
Coach will be informed that his meeting will take place
If the discussion does not result in a satisfactory conclusion, a meeting with all parties involved will be scheduled in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution.
 4. Student athlete and/or parent/guardian contacts the principal
Athletic Director should be informed that this contact will be made

Areas that will not be discussed include the following: playing time, discussions about other student athletes and game strategies. If a student athlete has questions about their “playing time”, they are encouraged to discuss the situation with the coach.

“Captain’s Practice”: It is important for parents/guardians and student athletes to understand that Suffield High School does not in any way sanction or condone pre-season “Captain’s Practice.” Participation in these types of activities is not required for selection to the high school team in that particular sport.

Athletic Equipment

- The student/athlete is responsible for all uniforms and equipment that is assigned to him/her.

- All equipment will be returned when the athlete completes the sport, either at the end of the season, or on leaving the team.
- If items are lost or abused, the student/athlete will be required to pay for a replacement.
- Uniforms are to be worn only at scheduled practices, contests or on game days.

Note: Athletes who do not return equipment/uniforms are ineligible to participate on additional athletic teams throughout the year. In addition, spring athletes will not receive their class schedules for the following school year until all items are returned or replacement costs have been submitted. Graduating seniors will not receive their cap and gown until they too have met the above responsibilities.

PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS

Athletes found using anabolic steroids, hormones and/or analogues, diuretics, and/or other performance enhancing drugs will be held accountable according to CIAC policies and procedures. Athletes found using performance enhancing drugs by their school district will be immediately disqualified from any further participation in CIAC-sponsored sports for a period of 180 school days on each occurrence. The policy and procedures apply to all CIAC controlled activities sponsored by the school.

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE

All Student athletes and their parents/guardians are required to sign the High School Sports Contract which acknowledges their awareness of the required rules and regulations for members of the High School athletic teams at the beginning of each sports season in regards to tobacco/alcohol/drug use, and the inherent risk associated with sports. Each season's start date will be the first day of practice or tryouts, as stated by the CIAC. As of this date, the Suffield High School Athletic contract will be in effect regardless of whether the athlete has started his/her season or signed the athletic contract. When a violation of the contract is reported and verified by the coach or the administration, a meeting will be held with the student athlete and the Athletic Director. All students must also pass a physical exam (see below).

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Each student-athlete must have a current sports physical (within 13 months of the participation date) on file with the school nurse. Physicals must be renewed each and every school year the student is enrolled and participating in sports. All candidates for athletic teams must be examined by a physician, and deemed healthy to participate fully. Forms can be found on the Suffield Athletic Website.

PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students will abide by all CIAC rules and regulations.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Only students who are academically eligible may participate in athletics and extracurricular programs. Suffield High School's eligibility requirements for athletes exceed that of the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). In order to be eligible to participate in athletics or extracurricular programs, a student must:

- Be enrolled in at least 5 courses
- Have earned a quarterly G.P.A. of 1.7 or better with no more than one failing grade at the end of the marking period preceding the start of the season
- Maintain a positive standing within the school community. Students found in chronic defiance of school rules per BOE Policy #5144 will not be allowed to participate. If a student would otherwise be academically ineligible to participate in a fall sport, he or she may regain eligibility through successful completion of summer school. The final summer school grade will be utilized in lieu of the previous quarter grade for that individual subject when recalculating the student's G.P.A. Freshmen entering Suffield High School from the middle school or other sending schools are automatically eligible to participate in fall sports regardless of their academic record in the middle school.

ELIGIBILITY APPEALS

There may be special circumstances that lead a student to appeal the ineligibility status. Each student has the right to file one appeal per school-year. Such circumstances can include prolonged physical or mental illness, excessive absence due to illness or other matters, or a significant family and/or life event. To file an appeal the student should complete the form included in this regulation. Any student granted an appeal will obtain provisional eligibility and be required to engage in an "academic contract" developed in conjunction with his or her school counselor. Eligibility criteria will be checked weekly and may be removed should the student's grades drop below the required 1.7 GPA. If an appeal is denied by the Principal, a hearing may be requested with the superintendent whose decision is final. Please refer to Board policy 5135 for additional information and a copy of the appeal form.

ATTENTION ATHLETES

In accordance with the CIAC you are NOT ELIGIBLE if:

- You have not passed at least four (4) units at the end of the last regular marking period as of the official day that grades are issued, with the exception of fall eligibility.* (Rule I. A.)
- You are nineteen (19) years of age; Student-athletes will be allowed to compete up through their 19th birthday, however, if their 20th birthday falls during a season, the student-athlete will not be allowed to start or compete during that season and all eligibility will cease. (Rule II.B.)
- You have changed schools without a change of legal residence; (Rule II.C.)
- You have been in attendance for more than eight (8) semesters (A student has eight (8) consecutive semesters or four (4) consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into the ninth grade to be eligible for interscholastic competition). (Rule II. B.)
- You play or practice with an outside team in the same sport while a member of the school team after the first scheduled game in any season; (Rule II.E.)

The exception to Rule II.E. shall be:

1. Participation in parent/child tournaments and caddy tournaments.
 2. Swimming, tennis, gymnastics – a pupil may practice but not compete with a non-CIAC team or as an individual during the season as long as such practices do not interfere with or replace member school practices.
- You play under an assumed name on an outside team; (Rule II.F.)
 - You receive personal economic gain for participation in any CIAC sport. (Rule II.F.)
 - Your work habits or conduct both in and out of school are such as to make you unworthy to represent the ideals, principles, and standards of your school.
 - Suffield rules are more restrictive than those of the CIAC. (See: PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES).

A PLAN OF INSURANCE

A plan of Interscholastic Sports Insurance has been purchased by the Suffield Public Schools to cover students participating in our organized sports programs. This form of insurance provides that valid claims for injuries sustained as a result of participation in interscholastic athletics will be paid on an EXCESS BASIS. This means that the Board of Education provided insurance will pay any amount in excess of that portion covered by family medical coverage, such as Blue Cross, Blue Shield, etc. Also, in many cases, payments will be after family medical coverage has paid their portion of the doctor's or hospital expenses. In case of an injury that requires medical attention, a school official will complete Part One of the claim form and forward it to you for subsequent completion and forwarding to your doctor or hospital.

SPORTS INFORMATION

Athletic Schedules, results and sports information can be found in two areas:

1. The Suffield High School website – shs.suffield.org (Go to Athletics).
2. The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference – CIAC (the governing body of high school athletics.) Website – www.ciacsports.com (on this site you will find athletic schedules and directions to all schools as well as offsite facilities, game results and post season tournament information. You can also register to receive schedule updates.)

SUFFIELD HIGH CONCUSSION POLICY

Athlete suffers head injury with concussion symptoms- Athlete is removed from activity for the rest of the day. Athlete's parents are contacted (by coach and/or athletic trainer) regarding injury; follow up care, and return to play protocol. Upon medical professional clearance (physician or athletic trainer) and successful completion of neuro-cognitive testing (ImPact Test), athlete will follow recommended Graduated Return to Play.

Graduated Return to Play. Table 1. Graduated Return-to-Play Protocol Rehabilitation Stage, Functional Exercise at Each Stage of Rehabilitation, Objective of Each Stage

1. No activity Complete physical and cognitive rest Recovery
2. Light aerobic exercise - walking, swimming, or stationary cycling, keeping intensity to, 70% of maximum predicted heart rate; no resistance training Increase heart rate
3. Sport-specific exercise Skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer; no head impact activities Add movement
4. Non-contact training drills. Progression to more complex training drills, e.g., passing drills in football and ice hockey; may start progressive resistance training. Exercise, coordination and cognitive load
5. Full-contact practice following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities. Restore athlete's confidence; coaching staff assesses functional skills
6. Return to play Normal game play

There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each stage, and should drop back to the previous asymptomatic level if any post-concussive symptoms recur.

Suffield High School is a "Class Act" School

The CIAC "Class Act" Sportsmanship Standards

ALL Spectators (including parents):

- Will adhere to the host school's acceptable dress code at all home and away contests commensurate with classroom behavior. For CIAC tournament contests all spectators will be appropriately attired with their torso completely covered and with no visible degrading or demeaning writings/logos.

- Any signs displayed must be positive in nature, reference only the school supported by the sign maker, and must be pre-approved by the Athletic Director of the school reference in the sign.
- During outdoor sports, no air horns or horns of any kind or whistles will be used, and any other noisemakers will be allowed with the host athletic director's approval and only be used during "dead ball" situations to celebrate good play. During indoor sports, no noisemakers will be used. Pep bands are allowable at a home contest if the school provides adult supervision and the band only plays during "dead ball" situations.
- Spectators will cheer positively to support their team, will not cheer negatively against the opponent.
- Spectators will show respect for the game officials and their decisions.
- Spectators will show respect for the playing of the National Anthem.

Game Personnel / Announcers:

- Will explain and consistently enforce host school expectations for spectators.
- Will be enthusiastic but not show favoritism while making announcements, and never publicly question or criticize the players, coaches, or officials.
- Will encourage respect for the National Anthem and remind spectators to remove caps and stand.

Coaches:

- Will exemplify high moral character, behavior and leadership, lead by example, and set a standard for players and spectators to follow both on and off the athletic arena.
- Will teach players the rules of the game and to respect the game, and will take action when athletes exhibit poor sportsmanship.
- Will respect the integrity and judgment of officials and will not publicly criticize or question the decisions of officials.
- Will be aware of the competitive balance of contests and will manage the score in a manner that is sportsmanlike and respectful of opponents.

Players:

- Will accept the responsibility and privilege the student-athlete has in representing their school and community by learning and showing teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline in all aspects of the game.
- Will demonstrate respect for self, coach, teammates, opponents, officials and spectators by exhibiting good character and conducting themselves as a positive role model.
- Will win and lose graciously. Will cheer for your team, not against your opponent.
- Will congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.