

Hillsdale Athletic Handbook



2024-2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Hillsdale Community Schools Athletic Program is to provide student-athletes the privilege of participation in an interscholastic athletic program. The ultimate goal is the pursuit of excellence within the framework of sporting behavior and positive ethics and values.

FORWARD

The purpose of this handbook is to inform our student-athletes and their parents of the rules and regulations of the Hillsdale Community Schools Athletic Program. The rules set forth in this document are intended to enhance the quality experiences available through educational athletics by providing a program based on appropriate discipline and positive values.

Being a Hillsdale High School or Middle School Student-Athlete carries with it a tremendous responsibility. Participants are expected to represent their school and community with pride and dignity. Conduct at school, practices and games affects the image people have of our school and community. A student who participates in our athletic program is making a voluntary choice of self-discipline and dedication. This necessitates a strong emphasis on good training habits.

The training regulations outlined in this handbook are established with students' wellbeing and fitness in mind. Striving for excellence requires our athletes to work to be their best. It must be understood that students follow the rules set forth by the Board of Education, Athletic Department and the Michigan High School Athletic Association to enjoy the privilege of participating in athletics. Setting goals and making a personal commitment to achieve those goals is an important first step toward achieving excellence.

PHILOSOPHY

Interscholastic athletics is an integral part of the comprehensive school experience. The purpose of athletics is to foster optimum growth - physical, mental, social and moral of each participant. However, participation is a privilege, not a right. Emphasis will be on teaching "through athletics" in addition to teaching the skills "of athletics." Athletes are students first, and their experiences in athletics are a vital part of the total education available through the Hillsdale Community Schools. The Athletic Program shall exist for the value which it has for students and not for the benefit of the sponsoring institution.

CORE VALUES

In Hillsdale Community Schools athletics, the core values of Character Above Everything, Sportsmanship, Teamwork, Integrity, Never Quit Mindset, and Growth and Gratitude serve as guidance to help student-athletes develop not only as players but also as individuals. These core values serve as the foundation for building strong character, fostering positive interactions with teammates and opponents, upholding honesty and ethical behavior both on and off the field, cultivating a resilient attitude in the face of challenges, and constantly striving for personal growth while expressing gratitude for the opportunities and support received.

Character Above Everything:

Sportsmanship

Teamwork

Integrity

Never Quit Mindset

Growth and Gratitude

GRADE LEVEL PARTICIPATION

Middle School

Football (7, 8)
Volleyball (7, 8)
Cross Country (6, 7, 8)
Sideline Cheer (6, 7, 8)
Basketball (7, 8)
Wrestling (6, 7, 8)
Competitive Cheer (6, 7, 8)
Track (6, 7, 8)
Trap Shooting (6, 7, 8)

High School

Football (9-12)
Volleyball (9-12)
Cross Country (9-12)
Sideline Cheer (9-12)
Tennis (9-12)
Golf (9-12)
Soccer (9-12)
Basketball (9-12)
Wrestling (9-12)
Competitive Cheer (9-12)
Bowling (9-12)
Track (9-12)
Baseball (9-12)
Softball (9-12)
Trap Shooting (9-12)
Esports (9-12)

INSURANCE

Hillsdale Community Schools does not provide medical insurance for individual student athletes. Furthermore, our policy of insurance for the district excludes coverage for medical/dental expense incurred by any person practicing, instruction or participating in any physical training, sport, athletic activity or contest.

ATHLETIC INJURIES

Parents and student-athletes must fully understand and appreciate the risk of serious injury associated with participation in an interscholastic athletic program. Athletic activities can be hazardous, and taking part in such activities is a calculated risk on the part of the athlete and the parents. Reducing injuries is a priority for our coaching staff, trainer and administration, but the possible dangers must not be overlooked. The school district provides an athletic trainer who is available at the high school. Student-athletes who are injured are urged to notify the athletic trainer at the earliest possible opportunity. The athletic trainer will maintain records of all athletic injuries, and will assist medical personnel in the care and rehabilitation of athletic injuries. The athletic trainer will not overrule instructions from doctors. When a doctor prescribes a period of inactivity, the trainer and coaches will not allow the student-athlete to return to the game and practices until cleared by the doctor.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The CODE OF CONDUCT is the set of major rules commonly referred to as "Training Rules," They are primarily for the health and safety of our student-athletes. These rules are listed below, they have specific penalties and are referred to the Athletic Director or building Principal for enforcement.

1. Athletes shall not possess or consume alcoholic beverages.
2. Athletes shall not possess or use tobacco/nicotine in any form.
3. Athletes shall not possess or use electronic cigarettes, including vape devices.
4. Athletes shall not possess, use, consume or arrange an exchange of any illegal substance/drug. This rule also prohibits the improper or unauthorized use of a legal drug, or possession "drug paraphernalia." .

5. Athletes shall not remain at a location where drugs or alcohol are being used or consumed illegally.
6. Conduct unbecoming an athlete, depending on severity, may be a violation of the Athletic Code. Student-athletes are expected to behave in a manner that presents a positive image and does not detract from or bring embarrassment to the student athlete, coach, school or community.

The Code of Conduct will be enforced for all student-athletes 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, whether the violation occurs on or off school grounds. A student-athlete is defined as any middle school or high school student who has begun participation on a school sponsored athletic team. That student is considered a student-athlete for the remainder of his/her middle school or high school career, or until he/she has gone one full calendar year without participation on a school sponsored athletic team. When a student-athlete who is not presently participating on a team commits a violation, the penalty shall be enforced during his/her next season of participation. The student athlete must complete the season in which the penalty is served, or it will continue into the next season in which he/she participates, to be served in its entirety.

INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

The Athletic Director and/or building Principal shall investigate all alleged violations. The Athletic Director and/or building Principal will meet with the offending student-athlete as soon as possible and shall make the following determination:

1. Has the student committed the alleged offense?
2. Is the offense a Code of Conduct violation?

If the answer to both questions is determined to be "yes," then the following procedure shall be followed:

1. Inform the student-athlete of the appropriate penalty as prescribed under "PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS." Explain the "APPEALS PROCESS" to the student-athlete.
2. Inform the parents or guardians of the violation and prescribed penalty, and explain the "APPEALS PROCESS."
3. Inform the current coach and/or other coach(es) to be affected by the suspension.
4. Enter a copy of the incident report and prescribed penalty into the student's discipline file. This procedure is for the purpose of tracking the number of violations a student-athlete incurs only. It is not shared with anyone outside the Hillsdale School Community, and is destroyed when the student graduates from high school.
5. If the offending student-athlete participates in two sports concurrently under the "DUAL PARTICIPATION" provision outlined in this Handbook, during the time he/she is serving the penalty, he/she shall serve the penalty in both sports.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS

1. Length of Penalties

- A. All penalties will begin immediately after notifying the student
- B. The penalty for a first offense shall be a suspension for the number of contests required to equal 20 points, according to the table in section "C."
- C. The penalty for a second offense shall be a suspension for the number of contests required to equal 50 points, according to the table in section "C."
- D. TABLE FOR DETERMINING LENGTH OF SUSPENSION FOR A FIRST OR SECOND OFFENSE.

The table refers to "points per date of competition," and is based on the number of contests in a normal season. This system is used to make it easier to compute the length of suspensions when a penalty carries over from one season to another. Each suspension must be served in its entirety. For example, each contest in track counts seven points, so a "20-point" suspension would require three contests. The student-athlete would not become eligible half way through the third contest.

Sport	Points/ Date of Competition	Sport	Points / Date of Competition
Varsity Baseball	3	Varsity Softball	3
JV Baseball	3	JV Softball	3
Basketball	4	Tennis	5
JV Basketball	4	Track	7
Fresh Basketball	7	Varsity Volleyball	5
Cross Country	7	JV Volleyball	5
Football	11	Fresh Volleyball	7
Golf	5	Wrestling	7
Varsity Soccer	5	Middle School	10
JV Soccer	7	Bowling	7
Competitive Cheer	5	Esports	11
Trap Shooting	11		

E. The penalty for a third offense, or any subsequent offense(s), shall be a suspension from all participation in athletics for one full calendar year.

2. Students Committing Violations for the First Time:

At Hillsdale Community Schools we feel that it is essential to educate our students when they make mistakes. In instances where students violate the athletic code regarding the use of prohibited substances, athletes can choose to participate in the *Prime For Life Program* (6 hours) provided at no cost. If a student chooses to participate in the substance abuse program he/she will have the amount of games suspended reduced to the following. *Note: The following are the actual number of games the athlete will be suspended, not based on a number of points.*

Sport	# of Competitions	Sport	# of Competitions
Varsity Baseball	4	Varsity Softball	4
JV Baseball	4	JV Softball	4
Basketball	3	Tennis	2
JV Basketball	3	Track	2
Fresh Basketball	2	Varsity Volleyball	2
Cross Country	2	JV Volleyball	2
Competitive Cheer	2	Freshman Volleyball	2
Varsity Soccer	2	Wrestling	2
JV Soccer	2	Bowling	2
Golf	2	Middle School	1
Football	1	Esports	1
Trap Shooting	1		

3. Additional Provisions

- A. Student-athletes will be required to practice during suspensions for first or second offenses.
- B. Student-athletes on suspension may not dress for contests.
- C. Student-athletes on suspension will be expected to ride school transportation and sit with the team during contests. In some situations, this provision may be altered following an agreement between the coach and athletic director.
- D. Student-athletes who seek help regarding chemical dependency problems shall not be subject to disciplinary action provided that;
 - 1. There exists no violation at the time the student seeks help, and
 - 2. No subsequent violation occurs.
- E. Scrimmages do not count as a date of competition
- F. Canceled contests do not count as a date of competition

APPEALS PROCESS

Whenever a student-athlete or his/her parents wish to challenge the outcome of a hearing regarding an Athletic Code violation, an appeal may be made. The appeal must be made in writing within two (2) school days after the decision is rendered. The prescribed penalty will be implemented during the appeals process. An attempt will be made at all levels of appeal to process the appeal in as little time as possible. The chain of appeals is as follows:

Principal

Written appeal may be made to the building Principal within two (2) school days after the penalty is prescribed. The building Principal will schedule a hearing within two (2) school days, and render a decision within one (1) school day following the hearing.

Appeals Committee

Written appeal may be made to the Superintendent within two (2) school days following the Building Principal's decision. The Appeals Committee is composed of the superintendent who will act as chairman, the head coach of the sport involved, a non-coaching teacher, a second teacher who may or may not be a coach, and a member of the Board of Education. The Appeals Committee shall render a decision within two (2) school days after the Appeals Committee hearing. The total make-up of the Appeals Committee shall always include members of both genders.

Board of Education

Written appeal may be made to the Board of Education within two (2) school days after the decision of the Appeals Committee. The Board of Education will conduct a hearing within ten (10) school days and will render a decision within two (2) school days following the hearing.

GENERAL RULES

1. No student-athlete shall wear or use any school-owned equipment or uniform except in games and practices without proper authorization from the coach. All equipment and uniforms must be turned in to the coach promptly at the conclusion of the season. Student-athletes may be billed for lost or missing items, and may not begin participation in another sport until the items are returned or payment for the items has been received.
2. Any time a student-athlete quits a sport, he/she must meet with the coach and Athletic Director, and immediately turn in all equipment and the team uniform. A student-athlete who quits a sport may not go out for another sport during that season without permission from both coaches and the Athletic Director. A student-athlete who quits a sport may not return to the same sport (including in future years) without permission from the coach and the Athletic Director.
3. A student-athlete who requests to join a sport after the season has begun, must receive permission from the coach and the Athletic Director.
4. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and will be prohibited at all times. Hazing is defined as any willful act done by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, to another student for the purpose of subjecting such student to humiliation, intimidation, physical abuse or threats of abuse, social or other ostracism, shame, or disgrace. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing does not lessen the prohibition. Student-athletes engaging in such behavior will be disciplined by the coach and/or Athletic Director based on the severity of the incident.
5. Student-athletes must use transportation provided by the school for all AWAY contests. Parents may ask permission for their son/daughter to ride home with them or another responsible adult, but only if they (the parent) are at the contest, and such request is made in person after the contest. The coach will ask the parent to sign a list stating that they are taking their son/daughter.
6. Coaches are responsible for enforcing proper dress for their student-athletes during practice sessions. This includes the times before and after practice while the student athletes are in or around the school buildings. Coaches shall establish rules for dress before and after all home and away contests. The rules shall be consistent with the school dress code, and shall consider visibility and maintaining a proper image for the team, program and school district.
7. Each individual coach has the authority to establish team rules with the approval of the Athletic Director.
8. A coach may issue suspensions from competitions for violation of team rules which are determined by the coach to be "less than an athletic code violation". Each suspension shall be limited in amount for not more than 50% of a level one athletic code violation.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A student-athlete must be present the entire school day to participate in a contest or practice that day. Attendance at school is required on Friday for participation during weekend events. **EXCEPTIONS MAY BE MADE IN ADVANCE** by the Principal. The student-athlete or parent must contact the Principal before any school is missed to explain the reason for the absence. Emergency situations will be handled on a case by case basis.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Student achievement in the classroom is important for our student-athletes. Current grades are monitored regularly to determine the scholastic eligibility of all student-athletes.

Weekly Eligibility:

- A. High School – The first grade check for each quarter will be conducted on the Friday after 14 school days have occurred in that quarter. Grades will be monitored every week thereafter. Teachers will be expected to report the current grades of all student-athletes. Student-athletes who are failing more than one class will be declared ineligible the following Monday through Saturday. The grades of an ineligible student athlete will be checked the following week, to determine if he/she is to be reinstated the Monday after the grade check.

Per the MHSAA Handbook, A student not passing 66% of their courses will be ineligible for competition for 60 school days. The student can be reinstated after the 60th day baring they are passing 66% of their current courses. For Hillsdale High School this applies at each marking period when credit is awarded.

- B. Middle School- The first grade check for each quarter will be conducted on the Friday after 14 school days have occurred in that quarter. Grades will be monitored every week thereafter. Student-athletes who are failing two or more classes will be declared ineligible the following Monday through Saturday.

NOTE: A student-athlete who is not passing at least half of his/her current classes shall be declared ineligible without warning as per the MHSAA minimum eligibility requirements for Middle School students.

DUAL PARTICIPATION

Student-athletes are discouraged from playing multiple sports in the same season. In order to permit time to complete the dual participation process, the student-athlete should submit a formal application thirty (30) days prior to the first day of pre-season practice, as defined by the MHSAA Handbook. The steps to be followed in the application process are as follows:

1. Part I of the Dual Participation Application form (available in the Athletic Office) should be completed, signed and returned to the Athletic Director within the recommended timetable.
2. The Athletic Director will convene a meeting of the head coaches involved in the dual participation request, as soon as practical after receiving the application. If head coaches do not agree, the request is denied, and the student-athlete will be notified as soon as possible.
4. If both coaches agree that the situation is workable, all conditions and stipulations from both programs will be listed in Part II of the application form. Both head coaches must sign the form.
5. The High School Principal will complete Part III of the application.
6. The Athletic Director and/or Principal will meet with the student-athlete and at least one parent or guardian (if the student-athlete is under 18) to review Parts II and III of the application. If the conditions are acceptable, the student-athlete (and parent/ guardian if student-athlete is under 18) must sign Part IV of the application acknowledging and accepting the stipulations and conditions as stated.
7. Copies of the entire application are to be given to the Principal, Athletic Director, both head coaches and the student-athlete.

SPORTING BEHAVIOR

It is the responsibility of the Administration and Coaching Staff to promote positive sporting behavior. Each student-athlete is expected to:

1. Accept and understand the seriousness of his/her responsibility, and the privilege of representing the school and community.
2. Live up to the standards of sporting behavior established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
3. Learn the rules of the game thoroughly, and discuss them with parents, fans, fellow students, and elementary students. This will assist the student and others to achieve a better understanding and appreciation of the game.
4. Treat opponents the way the student-athlete would like to be treated, as a guest or friend. Who better than the participating athlete can understand all the hard work and team effort that is required of the sport.
5. Refrain from taunting, trash-talking and making any kind of derogatory remarks to an opponent during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial or sexual nature.
6. Refrain from intimidating behavior.
7. Wish opponents' good luck before the game and congratulate them in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
8. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. The officials are doing their best, and treating them with respect will make a positive impact on all the people at the event.

The officials are doing their best to help promote athletes and the sport. Treating them with respect, even if the athlete disagrees with their judgment, will only make a positive impression of the athlete and the team in the eyes of the officials and all the people at the event.

9. Win with humility; lose with grace and do both with dignity. Avoid excessive celebrating after a play or end of a game.

PARENT COMPACT

Parents and adults involved in school-sponsored events should be models of good sportsmanship and should lead by example by demonstrating fairness, respect, and self-control. Parents shall abide by:

- 1). A 24-hour rule where they do not criticize their athlete or question the coach concerning an athletic event or performance at an athletic event.
- 2). The discussion of playing time shall be with the coach, parent and athlete if there are questions. Playing time directly applies to performance during athletic contests and attitude during practice.
- 3.) Encouragement of their athlete to exhibit positive behavior and to not engage in unsportsmanlike behavior toward any coach, other parent, opponent, official or any other attendee at events.
4. Encourage positive relationships with the coach by reinforcing the principles of the coach's philosophy, discipline, and team goals.

SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS

Any form of unacceptable behavior by any student is subject to discipline which may include removal from the event, suspension of participation in all athletic events for a season or school year, suspension from school, and/or referral to the police. Unacceptable behavior by non-student spectators may result in removal from the event, denial of admission to school athletic events for a season or school year, or referral to local authorities.

1. Remember that s/he is at a contest to support and yell for the team and to enjoy the skill and competition; not to intimidate or ridicule the other team and its fans.
2. Remember that school athletics are learning experiences for students and that mistakes are sometimes made. Praise student-athletes in their attempt to improve themselves as students, as athletes, and as people as you would praise a student working in the classroom.
3. Remember that a ticket to a school event is a privilege to observe the contest, not a license to verbally assault others and be generally obnoxious.
4. Learn the rules of the game, so that s/he may understand and appreciate why certain situations take place.
5. Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, spectators, and support groups. Treat them as one would treat a guest in his/her own home.
6. Refrain from taunting or making any kind of derogatory remarks to the opponents during the game, especially comments of ethnic, racial, or sexual nature.
7. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Understand that they are doing their best to help promote the student-athlete, and admire their willingness to participate in full view of the public.
8. Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
9. Refrain from the use of any controlled substances (alcohol, drugs, etc.) before and during games, and afterwards on or near the site of the event (i.e. tailgating).
10. Use only those cheers that support and uplift the teams involved.
11. Recognize and complement the efforts of school and league administrators in emphasizing the benefits of educational athletics and the role of good sportsmanship to that end.
12. Be a positive behavior role model through his/her own actions and be censuring those close by whose behavior is unbecoming.

**HILLSDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT**

STUDENT-ATHLETE/PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The ATHLETIC HANDBOOK is available through the Hillsdale Community Schools website; www.hillsdaleschools.org.

I/we have read, understand, and have had all my questions answered concerning the HILLSDALE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK. I understand all conditions of participating and agree to abide by the rules contained therein.

Signature of Student-Athlete

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Date

This form must be signed and returned to the **Athletic Director** and be on file in the Athletic Office. Additional forms are available on the web site as well.

Parent Compact

Parents and adults involved in school-sponsored events should be models of good sportsmanship and should lead by example by demonstrating fairness, respect, and self-control. Parents shall abide by:

- 1). A 24-hour rule where they do not criticize their athlete or question the coach concerning an athletic event or performance at an athletic event.
- 2). The discussion of playing time shall be with the coach, parent and athlete if there are questions. Playing time directly applies to performance during athletic contests and attitude during practice.
- 3.) Encouragement of their athlete to exhibit positive behavior and to not engage in unsportsmanlike behavior toward any coach, other parent, opponent, official or any other attendee at events.
4. Encourage positive relationships with the coach by reinforcing the principles of the coach's philosophy, discipline, and team goals.