

Houghton Portage Township Schools Athletic/Co-Curricular Code of Conduct

ATHLETICS

The Houghton-Portage Township School District encourages participation in interscholastic athletics by both boys and girls. The various levels of competition include varsity, junior varsity, and freshman.

The sports offered at Houghton High School are: football, basketball, hockey, cross-country, swimming, skiing, golf, track, volleyball, softball, and baseball.

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION RULES AND REGULATIONS

Houghton High School is a member of the Michigan High School Athletic Association, and, as such, abides by the rules and regulations as set forth by that organization, some of which are outlined below.

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible to compete in athletics, a student must be enrolled in school not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day or the fourth Friday of February.

1. A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under nineteen years of age, except that a student whose nineteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year. Any student born before September 1, 1998, is ineligible.
2. No student shall be eligible for whom there is not on file a statement signed by a physician for the current school year certifying that (1) the student has passed a physical examination and is physically able to compete in athletic tryouts, practices, and contests and (2) effective August 1, 2008, there has been consent for disclosure to the MHSAA of information otherwise protected by FERPA and HIPPA for the purpose of determining eligibility. (3) A student must have a concussion form on file (included on the physical form). If you need more information on concussions go to <https://www.mhsaa.com/schools/parents> or contact the Athletic Office at 482-0450 ext. 1040.
3. A student shall not compete in athletics who has been enrolled in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, for more than eight semesters. The seventh and eighth semesters must be consecutive.
4. A student, once enrolled in grade nine, shall be allowed to compete in only four first semesters and four second semesters.

A complete set of MHSAA Rules and Regulations is available in the Athletic Director's Office.

POLICY FOR TRANSFERS FOLLOWING VIOLATIONS OF A SCHOOL'S STUDENT ATHLETIC CODE: Houghton High School will enforce upon a transfer student any period of ineligibility to which that student would have been subject as a result of a student or athletic code violation(s) at that student's most recent previously attended school.

Athletic Code of Conduct

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Participation in athletics is an integral part of a student's overall high school experience. Participation is a privilege and should elicit great pride in both the student and his or her family. While our number one goal as a school district is to provide a sound academic experience for all our students, athletics provide unique opportunities for students to promote their mental, physical, social and emotional development. By providing a strong athletic program, Houghton High School extends the privilege of enriching the mind and body to any student meeting district and Michigan High School Athletic Association requirements. Like anything of value, it comes with responsibility. That responsibility is a commitment from you to follow established rules. Athletes who comply with this code of conduct demonstrate a desire to dedicate themselves to self-improvement as well as to enhance the best interests of fellow teammates, coaches and school. If accepted, this privilege carries certain responsibilities as presented in this code.

ELIGIBILITY

These Rules of Eligibility are established by the Houghton Portage Township School District in conjunction with the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

This athletic code is in effect 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is IN ADDITION to the Discipline Rubric in the Student Handbook. Should a report be received by the school district of an alleged student violation of this code, an investigation will be initiated within ten school days of the receipt of the report. (For example, if a student violates the code in July, but a report of such a violation is not received by the school authorities until November, action will not be taken until after the school investigation is completed, which would be after the November reporting.)

1. In order to participate in HHS athletics, a student must be enrolled as a full-time student.
2. A current year copy of the Athletic Code of Conduct Contract signed by the athlete and his/her parent/guardian must be on file in the Athletic Office.

GOALS

Athletics are an integral part of your school experience. They provide learning experiences difficult to duplicate in other school activities. The goal of a team entering a competition is to win the competition. Therefore, although coaches shall make a sincere effort to allow each team member an opportunity to play in competition, there is no guarantee that every athlete will compete in every game. We subscribe to the following goals:

1. To develop leadership skills and responsibility
2. To show team spirit, encourage others and contribute to good morale.
3. To be fair and treat others with kindness.
4. To keep commitments to the team.
5. To experience a variety of activities and to offer an outlet for a wide variety of students' abilities and interests
6. To treat all persons respectfully regardless of individual differences; to show respect for legitimate authority (e.g. Coaches, Officials, Captains).
7. To accept responsibility to set a good example for teammates, peers, younger students, fans and the school community.
8. To understand the necessity of abstaining from the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in order to achieve the positive benefits of interscholastic athletics.
9. To realize that participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege with accompanying responsibilities.
10. To generate a sense of pride and unity for students, staff and community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating in athletics is a privilege and not a right. You are expected to assume the following responsibilities:

Responsibility to Yourself: The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden and develop strength of character. You owe it to yourself to derive the greatest benefit from your high school experiences, to live a healthy lifestyle and to respect your health both physically and mentally at all times.

Responsibility to your Academic Studies: Your academic studies and your participation in other co-curricular activities prepare you for life as an adult. In all cases, your academic performance must meet eligibility standards prior to participation in any co-curricular activity.

Responsibility to Your School: Houghton cannot maintain its position as having outstanding schools unless you do your best in the activity in which you are engaged and are a good role model. Other students and faculty are watching you. They know who you are and what you do. Make them proud. Be an example. Do not do anything to let them down.

Responsibility to your Community: The community and school tax monies make your athletic experience possible. For that reason, you must remember that you hold a clear and paramount responsibility to your community. You assume a leadership role when you are involved in athletics. The student body and citizens of the community know you. You are very visible with the spotlight on you. The student body, the community and other communities judge our schools by your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute significantly to school spirit and community pride. Our desire is that our students are a class act, known as young people of character and excellence. Make Houghton proud of you and your community proud of your school by your consistent demonstration of these ideals.

Responsibility to Your Family: Never give your parents anything to be ashamed of or embarrassed by. When you know in your heart that you have lived up to all of the training rules, that you have practiced to the best of your ability every day and that you have participated in the activity, you can keep your self-respect, and your family can be justly proud of you, win or lose.

Responsibility to Younger Students: The younger students in Houghton are watching you. They know who you are and what you do. Make them proud. Be an example. They will copy you in many ways. Set good examples for them.

CODE OF CONDUCT RULES, MISDEMEANORS AND VIOLATIONS

This code of conduct program is not designed to be a punishment, but a deterrent to your becoming involved in risky and dangerous behaviors. It is also to insure that you have the best possibilities to succeed in your activity and to learn the valuable lessons that athletics can teach. Because your mental and physical well-being are essential to your success, we want you to reach your full potential. Therefore, we are expecting you to become an active part of the solution, not to become part of the problem.

CODE OF CONDUCT RULES

The following rules will apply to each athlete and will be in effect at all times during the season. Each coach also has the prerogative to establish and implement additional rules specific to his/her particular program. Coaches are expected to share these in writing with their participants and their parents/guardians on or before the first day of practice. A copy of these additional guidelines and expectations will be on file in the Athletic Office.

Academic:

Semester Eligibility

A student who fails to pass five subjects with a "D-" or better at the end of any semester will be ineligible for the first 61 days of the following semester. A student must be passing at least 66.6% of his/her classes.

A student with any grade of "Incomplete" at the end of any semester will be ineligible until the school accepts the credit.

A student entering 9th grade for the first time may participate without reference to their 8th grade records.

Weekly Eligibility

Any student who is seriously deficient (D- or E) in two or more classes will be ineligible. A student must be passing at least 66.6% of his/her classes.

Eligibility is determined each week, from the beginning of the semester. Eligibility checks are done every Thursday, no later than 3:00 p.m. Students who are determined to be ineligible will remain so from 8:00 a.m. Monday until 8:00 a.m. the following Monday.

If you are academically ineligible, you will be allowed to practice with your team or group, but you will not travel with your team, suit up or sit on the bench at games, etc. You will be a spectator only.

An ineligible student can become eligible again on the first Monday following a satisfactory Thursday eligibility check.

Attendance: Students must attend at least half the day in order to participate that day. (Note: this rule allows a student to keep a doctor's appointment without losing participation privileges.)

Dress: Every athlete is expected to maintain appropriate standards of dress and grooming while representing his/her school or team.

Cell Phone/Electronic Device Privacy: It is the practice of Houghton-Portage Township School District to ensure the privacy of all individuals during the time they occupy locker room facilities at school and during school sponsored events. The use of cell phones is prohibited in any school locker room. Cell phones found in locker rooms may be confiscated.

Transportation: Students must ride the school bus or other school transportation to and from all events unless a request is made by a parent and the student is given special permission by the principal, athletic director, or coach to use some other means of transportation.

Injury: There are dangers and risks of playing or practicing to play any athletic events or contests. Participation may result in serious injury or physical disabilities that may affect the normal life-time activities, general health and well-being of participants. Every participant in athletics is required to report any injury to the coach at the time it occurs. The coach will fill out an accident report form.

Equipment: Athletes are responsible for any uniforms and/or equipment issued to them. Each athlete is financially responsible for all lost, damaged (through negligence), or unreturned items issued by school officials in that student's name. Students will not be allowed to participate, practice, or compete in another sport until he/she has returned or paid for all uniforms and equipment that was issued to them in a previous season.

Honesty Clause:

1. Athletes shall be truthful.
2. Athletes shall be forthcoming with information.

If a Houghton District Administrator has a reasonable suspicion that a specific athlete may have violated the Athletic Code of Conduct, he/she may question that student about a possible violation. In responding to any such questioning about his/her personal actions, **it is expected that the student shall answer truthfully**. Also during the questioning process, a student may not attempt to mislead or misrepresent himself/herself, thereby impeding the investigation. If a student's answer is subsequently found to be untrue, disciplinary action/penalty will be doubled. (Example: a half season suspension will become a full season.)

CODE OF CONDUCT MISDEMEANORS

The following misdemeanors will apply to each athlete and will be in effect at all times during the season. The following misdemeanors are unacceptable and the principal and athletic director reserve the right to impose a penalty as deemed appropriate by the severity of the infractions which may include the suspension from practice and/or competition.

1. An unexcused absence from any class or study hall (even if the time is made up) automatically makes a person ineligible for the next event or contest. (Note: this rule applies "in season" only. Once the first practice begins, we are "in season.")
2. Students in violation of our Cheating/Plagiarism Policy will be ineligible for the next event.
3. Hazing/Initiation: Houghton-Portage Township Schools will not permit, nor will any athlete stage any type of "initiation ceremony" or hazing at any time on any level. This prohibition includes locker/shower pranks, etc.
4. Violations/misdemeanors that lead to an in-school or out-of-school suspension automatically make a student ineligible for the next event or contest. (Note: this rule applies "in season" only. Once the first practice begins, we are "in season.") In addition, students serving an out-of-school suspension will also be suspended from participation, including practices, for the length of the school suspension. The out of school suspension rule applies to the days of suspension, including evenings.

ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

Athletic Code of Conduct violations will apply to each student athlete on a year-round (12 month) basis in all locations, including non-school activities. Violation of the Code will result in penalties, which are consistent with those identified within the code as determined by the school board. All Athletic Code of Conduct violations will be cumulative, beginning with a student's initial participation on a freshman, junior varsity, or varsity team.

Criminal Behavior: Students shall not be involved in any criminal activity including but not limited to theft, vandalism, assault, inappropriate texting, cyberbullying, arson, breaking and entering, or any felony.

Chemical Health Violation: A chemical health violation includes Possession, Use, Buying, Selling and/or Being Under the Influence of Any Drugs and Drug Paraphernalia: (Note drugs are defined as tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, performance enhancing drugs, or medications without a prescription or use not in accordance to prescription directions.)

Presence at party or gathering where alcohol or drugs are being illegally consumed: If an athlete attends a party where alcohol or drugs are being illegally dispensed and/or consumed, the student must **LEAVE IMMEDIATELY AND SAFELY**. To remain in the presence of this illegal activity may constitute a violation of the code of conduct. *

Note: Athletes should encourage as many classmates as possible to leave with them.

*The intent of the "presence at a party" rule is not to deny participation with adult family members in gatherings such as weddings, anniversaries or other family gatherings.

Hosts of Parties Lose the Most: If it is determined that an HHS athlete was involved in the organization, facilitation, promotion, or hosting of an event where drugs and alcohol were illegally dispensed and/or consumed, there may be a greater consequence for that particular athlete than others who may have been in attendance.

Cyber Image Policy: Any identifiable image, photo or video which implicates an athlete to have been in possession or presence of alcohol and/or drugs or portrays actual use of alcohol and/or drugs, or portrays an athlete participating in any illegal activity shall be confirmation of a violation of the code.

PENALTIES FOR CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

First Violation: The penalty for a first violation will be not less than suspension from two events if the length of the season is 12 contests or less; or, if the length of the season exceeds 12 contests, the penalty will not be less than suspension from four activities

or contests. However, a first offense, depending on its severity, could result in a short-term suspension, long term suspension, or even permanent loss of eligibility.

Second Violation: Up to and including suspension from all athletics for one year from the date the penalty is imposed or even permanent loss of eligibility.

Third Violation: Up to and including permanent loss of eligibility.

CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS REINSTATEMENT

All students must seek reinstatement after any code of conduct violation to regain eligibility.

1. The student must attend all practices and meetings while under suspension. (Note: If an athlete is serving an out-of-school suspension, he/she may not attend any school events during the suspension.)
2. The student must re-sign the code of conduct contract.

CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS SUSPENSION PROCEDURE

When an alleged violation of the Code is reported to the administration, the administrator or his/her designee shall meet with the student.

1. In the event that the student admits to the allegation of a violation at this meeting, the administrator shall impose the appropriate penalty for the violation as specified, effective immediately. The student and his/her guardians shall be given notice of the violation and the discipline imposed.
2. In the event that the student denies the alleged violation, the administrator shall determine whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant further action. If there is sufficient evidence that the student has committed the alleged violation, the administrator shall impose the penalty for the violation as specified, which begins immediately. The student and his/her guardians shall be given notice of the violation and the discipline imposed.

POWER OF THE BOARD

The Houghton-Portage Township School Board of Trustees has the authority to control athletic activities, and to take action with regard to student conduct regardless of whether or not the court system imposes a penalty. The school district is not required to wait for the court to take action before imposing its own penalties for violations of this or any other code of conduct.

The Houghton-Portage Township School District reserves the right to suspend or terminate the participation in athletics of any student. The Houghton-Portage Township School District Board of Education, its administrators and staff review behavior and performance of participants engaging in the school athletic program and require compliance with standards as a condition of continued participation in the program.

The Houghton-Portage Township School Board recognizes the value of athletics and desires to provide equitable access to all students. This code of conduct is intended to help promote the care, welfare, and safety of students involved in athletics.