



**COMSTOCK PARK ATHLETICS**  
**2023-2024 HANDBOOK**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a great honor and privilege to be a *Comstock Park Panther* and being an athlete at Comstock Park Public Schools carries with it a tremendous amount of responsibility. It must be understood that students who choose not to follow the rules set forth by the Comstock Park School District, the Comstock Park Athletic Department, and the Michigan High School Athletic Association may be denied the *privilege* of participation in athletics. Student athletes should strive to represent their school and community with pride and dignity at all times. Your conduct at school, practice and games affects the image people have of the Comstock Park Public School system and the Comstock Park community.

## **TO THE PARENTS**

This handbook is intended to keep both you and your student informed about our athletic program and to make you aware of the expectations we have for our coaches, athletes, parents and spectators. It is our goal to establish an athletic program that we can all be proud of and a program that supports the educational process at Comstock Park.

We are concerned with the physical, social, emotional and educational development of young people through athletics. We believe that a properly controlled, well-organized athletic program meets the students' needs for self-expression, mental alertness, and physical growth. It is our mission to maintain a program that is sound in purpose and that will enhance our students' educational experience.

A student who elects to participate in athletics is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline, dedication and sacrifice. This necessitates a strong emphasis on good training habits. Training regulations outlined in this handbook are established with the athletes' well-being in mind. We will strive for and have expectations of excellence.

As a parent of a student-athlete, we expect that you will understand and support the policies set forth in this book and all policies established for students at Comstock Park Public Schools. As an adult member of this community, you are a role model for our students. Students will emulate your behavior. It is, therefore, very important that you lead by positive example. We expect parents to display good sportsmanship at all times and to adhere to program, school, conference, and state guidelines at all events. Parents too represent our District and Community.

## **COMSTOCK PARK ATHLETIC PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

The mission of the Comstock Park Athletic Program is to nurture student athletes through their high school years to:

1. Develop a positive mental attitude and a strong sense of self.
2. Establish and enhance life skills necessary to be successful and productive in the adult world.
3. Encourage participation, fair play, good sportsmanship and teamwork.
4. Promote a healthy, physically fit individual.

### **COACHES' EXPECTATIONS: WHAT SHOULD YOU EXPECT FROM YOUR COACH**

1. Coaches should strive to develop good rapport with all involved members of the program: parents, athletes, faculty, staff, administration, boosters, media and community.
2. Coaches should work in cooperation with the district, conference, MHSAA, and community to develop and promote a program that supports and enhances the educational experience for students at Comstock Park Public Schools.
3. Coaches should maintain high standards of discipline at all times. Coaches are role models for the young people that they work with. Further, coaches hold high profile positions in the community. It is essential that our coaches set a good example for students by enforcing and following our school and athletic policies.
4. Coaches should be an example of good sportsmanship and fair play. We want our athletes to compete passionately with dignity and great character. Our coaches must set an example.
5. Coaches should be an example of good leadership. Diligence, enthusiasm, honesty, and a love for educational athletics are all part of a professional pride that should be exhibited by our coaches. Professional appearance and preparation should be evident in practice and competition.
6. Coach should engage in constant professional development. We want our students to become life-long learners – coaches must set the example. A coach must constantly take advantage of the opportunities presented for self-improvement. Attendance at district meetings, rules meetings, workshops and clinics is required.
7. Coaches should strive to establish outstanding communication. Coaches should develop methods to communicate within the specific program and the school community. Season schedules should be developed and readily available so that families can plan around

participation. Coaches should have practice schedules; they should communicate the schedule to those involved in the program and stick to the schedule as much as possible. Coaches should also develop written documents that communicate the expectations for their specific program. Changes should be well communicated (in advance whenever possible) to athletes and parents.

8. Coaches should strive to develop a coherent program from the youth level through the high school. Coaches should work with established youth programs, coordinate middle school programs and run camps and clinics that promote their sport in our community.

### **ATHLETES' EXPECTATIONS – WHAT WE EXPECT FROM OUR ATHLETES**

1. Athletes should abide by all training rules established by the Comstock Park Athletics, OK Conference and MHSAA.
2. Athletes should be proud of our school's reputation and work hard to protect it. The good name of our school is more important than any contest won by unfair play. Good sportsmanship and fair play is of utmost importance at all times. Remember, you are an ambassador representing Comstock Park.
3. Athletes should accept decisions of officials without dispute. Officials are seldom responsible for your success, so do not blame them for your failures.
4. Athletes should strive for excellence on and off the field. Remember, you are a student first. Athletes are expected to meet high expectations in the classroom including, but not limited to attendance, effort and behavior.
5. Athletes are expected to abide by rules and expectations set forth by each individual coach.
6. Athletes should treat team members, opponents, coaches, and officials with respect and dignity at all times.
7. Athletes should recognize their role within the team. Always encourage others to achieve.

### **PARENT EXPECTATIONS – WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PARENTS**

1. Parents should support school, program and team rules and policies at all times.
2. Encourage your student athlete to be the best that he or she can be while accepting your athlete's strengths and limitations.

3. Show good sportsmanship as a supporter of Comstock Park Athletics. Refrain from negative comments about decisions made by contest officials, never criticize or verbally attack any student athlete or coach, and cheer positively for our teams.
4. Teach your athlete by precept and example respect for school authorities and contest officials. Provide support for them in cases of adverse decisions and refrain from critical comments.
5. Follow the established procedures providing feedback. The feedback process starts with a conversation with your athlete to identify the issue and discuss possible solutions that reflect Comstock Park Program Philosophy and the expectations outlined by our coach.

### **PARENT/COACH RELATIONS**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations in today's world. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and we will, ultimately, provide greater benefit to our student-athletes. As parents, when your son or daughter becomes involved in our programs, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on your student-athlete. You also have the responsibility to accept decisions made in the program and follow the procedures and guidelines set forth in this handbook.

#### **You should expect the following communication from your coach:**

1. Expectations the coach has for your athlete and the team.
2. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
3. Team procedures, expectations and requirements.

#### **The coach will expect the following communication from the student athlete:**

1. Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance.
2. Special concerns regarding coach's expectations or philosophy.

*\*Athletes are encouraged to address issues and/or concerns directly with their coach. The high school years are a period of developing maturity and independence. We want to teach our student-athletes to take responsibility for their own life situations. As your son or daughter becomes involved in the athletic programs at Comstock Park, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your student-athlete wishes. Athletes are encouraged to discuss concerns with their coach, especially at these times. Your athlete NEEDS YOUR HELP to prepare for productive and beneficial conversations with peers and coaches.*

#### **Appropriate concerns for parents to discuss with coaches:**

1. The treatment of your student-athlete, mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your son or daughter to improve; after a conversation with their coach.
3. Concerns about your student-athlete's behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your son or daughter not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your student's coach. Other issues, however, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

**Issue that are not appropriate to discuss with coaches:**

1. Playing time.
2. Team strategy/play calling.
3. Other student-athletes.

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged, but should always be done by appointment. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

**If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, you should follow this procedure:**

1. Wait 24 hours.
2. Call the coach to set up an appointment. **Never approach a coach before or after a practice or a game to discuss a concern.** These can be emotional times for both the parent and coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.
3. If the coach cannot be reached, contact the Athletic Director and the meeting will be set up for you.
4. Plan to discuss appropriate concerns only. Coaches are instructed that they should not discuss those issues listed above.

*\*A conference that is set up with a coach and a parent using the appropriate procedure shall not result in disciplinary action against the student-athlete due to the meeting.*

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

You can help us establish an outstanding reputation for good sportsmanship. We must all work hard in conducting ourselves in a commendable manner. A display of unsportsmanlike conduct can result in sanctions against the offending school, team, or athlete. Always observe the following guidelines for good sportsmanship.

1. The good name of our school is more important than any contest won by unfair play.
2. Accept decisions of officials without dispute. Officials are seldom responsible for our success, so do not blame them for our failures.
3. Recognize and show appreciation for the fine play of your opponent.
4. Be proud of our school's reputation and work hard to protect it.
5. Remember, as a member of our athletic program you represent more than yourself; you represent your child, yourself, our program, our district and our community. Never conduct yourself in a way that brings discredit to the Comstock Park Athletic Program.

## **POTENTIAL DANGERS IN ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION**

Parents and athletes should fully understand and appreciate the risk of serious injury associated with participation in sports programs provided by Comstock Park Public Schools. Athletic activities can be hazardous and taking part in such activities is calculated risk-taking on the part of the athlete and parents. While reducing injuries to a minimum is the goal of our coaching staff and administration, the possible dangers must not be overlooked.

Comstock Park Public Schools **does not** assume financial responsibility for medical, hospital, or ambulance expenses incurred because of athletic injuries. Athletics is a voluntary program in which students participate at their own risk. Insurance is not provided by the school.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING RULES**

1. Athletes shall not possess or consume alcoholic beverages or any illegal or controlled substances/drugs. This rule also prohibits the sale, distribution, or the improper or unauthorized use of a legal drug.
2. No athlete shall possess or use tobacco in any form including chewing tobacco.
3. Athletes shall not conduct themselves in a way that brings disfavor to themselves, the athletic program, Comstock Park Public Schools, or the Comstock Park community.
4. The above list is not all inclusive. If not stated in the above, the matter should be discussed with the Athletic Director.

## **ATHLETIC COUNCIL**

The Athletic Council is the body responsible for ruling on appeals of athletic code violations. The Council shall consist of the Athletic Director, at least one coach, one other administrator, and/or a member of the teaching staff. The Council will meet whenever appeals of disciplinary actions are brought to the attention of the Athletic Director or Principal. The Athletic Director will act as chairperson.

## **PENALTY PROCEDURES**

1. The Athletic Director or his/her designee will inform the student-athlete of the alleged violation in person or by phone.
2. The role of the Athletic Director is to determine if a violation has occurred and, if so, the appropriate penalty under the *Comstock Park Athletic Code of Conduct*.
3. The decision by the Athletic Director concerning that violation and penalty will be written and mailed to the parents/guardians and athlete.
4. An athlete must complete the entire season of the sport in which he/she is suspended. Failure to complete the season will transfer the penalty to the next sport in which the athlete chooses to participate.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

Whenever an athlete or his/her parents question the outcome of a hearing regarding an athletic code violation, an appeal may be made. The chain of appeals is as follows:

1. Athletic Council – The appeal must be made in writing to the Athletic Director within five school days after the Athletic Director renders a decision. The penalty imposed remains in effect during the appeal. The Athletic Council will review the appeal and render a decision within five school days. The decision of the Athletic Council may be appealed to the Building Principal.
2. Building Principal – The appeal must be made in writing to the Building Principal within five school days after the Athletic Council renders a decision. The penalty imposed remains in effect during the appeal. The Principal will review the appeal and render a decision within five school days.
3. There is no appeal beyond the principal for suspensions less than an academic year. For suspension of more than an academic year, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent of Schools, in writing, within five school days of the principal's decision. Appeals will not be heard unless the aforementioned procedure is followed.



## **REPORTING VIOLATIONS**

Anyone who is willing to be identified may report an alleged violation. All teachers, coaches, and administrators are obligated to report any situation which may be a violation of the Athletic Code. If a police report is on record, the parents may be required to produce a copy of the report to the Athletic Director.

## **JURISDICTION**

This Athletic Code will be enforced for all athletes during the entire calendar year both on and off school property. This code will also be enforced at all athletic related functions both during and outside the school year.

An athlete is defined as any student who has begun participation on any athletic team. That student is considered an athlete (for the purpose of enforcing the Athletic Code) for the remainder of his/her school career.

When an athlete who is not presently participating commits a violation, the penalty shall be enforced during his/her next season of participation. The athlete must complete the season in which the penalty is served or the penalty will carry over into the next season of participation.

## **PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS**

The following are the minimum penalties to be imposed for an infraction of the Athletic Code. Additional or more severe penalties may be imposed depending on the circumstances.

**A. Substance Violation: alcohol, e-cigarettes, drugs or tobacco (possession, sale, and/or distribution of alcohol, unlawful drugs, drug paraphernalia, or look-alike materials).**

1. Student athletes who seek help regarding a chemical dependency problem shall not be subject to disciplinary action provided:
  - a. There exists no violation at the time the student seeks help (e.g. the student is not in possession of or under the influence of alcohol or other unlawful drugs) and, in the opinion of the Athletic Director or Principal, the spirit of the policy has not been violated; and
  - b. No subsequent violation occurs.
2. First Offense - After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete may be suspended for up to 25% - 50% of the competitive season.

- a. If the athlete is not currently participating in an athletic season or is near the end of a season, the suspension will be carried over to the next season of competition.
  - b. The athlete will be required to attend all practices during the suspension and must attend all games, but will not be allowed to dress in uniform.
  - c. This action is in addition to any discipline administered to the student under the school policies of Comstock Park Public Schools.
  - d. Suspension may be reduced with school approved counseling and or community service.
3. Second Offense - After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete may be suspended for up to 50% - 100% of the competitive season.
    - a. Suspension may be reduced with school approved counseling and or community service.
  4. Third Offense - After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete may be suspended for up to 100% of the competitive season.

**B. Violations for conduct unbecoming an athlete or other violations as determined by the Athletic Director.** Conduct unbecoming an athlete can take on many forms which include, but are not limited to, attendance at parties where alcohol or other drugs are present, illegal acts or other inappropriate behaviors that bring disfavor on the school and/or the athletic program.

1. **Level One** – These are the most serious behavioral offenses and would include the behaviors listed below. This list is not all-inclusive, but is intended to provide examples of the types of behaviors that are included in this level.
  - Ejection from an athletic contest for flagrant misconduct as determined by the Athletic Director.
  - Assault charges are confirmed.
  - Police involvement.
  - Larceny (value of \$100 or more).

- a. **First Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to 20% of the competitive season.
  - b. **Second Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to one calendar year beginning with the date the offense is written up by the Athletic Director.
  - c. **Third Offense** – The athlete may be eliminated from athletic participation for the remainder of his/her high school or middle school career.
2. **Level Two** – These behaviors are inappropriate, but not as serious as Level One behaviors and would include the behaviors listed below. This list is not all-inclusive, but is intended to provide examples of the types of behaviors that are included in this level.
- Fighting on or off school property.
  - Larceny (less than \$100).
  - Gross Misconduct violations of the Student Handbook.
- a. **First Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete may be suspended for up to 10% of the competitive season.
  - b. **Second Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to 20% of the competitive season.
  - c. **Third Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to one calendar year beginning with the date the offense is written up by the Athletic Director.
  - d. **Fourth Offense** – The athlete may be eliminated from athletic participation for the remainder of his/her high school or middle school career.
3. **Level Three** – These behaviors are inappropriate, but not as serious as Level One or Two behaviors and would include the behaviors listed below. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive. It is an example of the types of behaviors that are included in this level.
- Unacceptable Conduct violations of the Student Handbook.

- Violation of team rules.
  - Disruptive behavior in the school setting.
  - Cheating.
- a. **First Offense** – Warning Penalty.
  - b. **Second Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete may be suspended for up to 10% of the competitive season.
  - c. **Third Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to 20% of the competitive season.
  - d. **Fourth Offense** – After due process has been afforded to the athlete and a violation has been determined, the athlete will be suspended for up to one calendar year beginning with the date the offense is written up by the Athletic Director.
  - e. **Fifth Offense** – The athlete may be eliminated from athletic participation for the remainder of his/her high school or middle school career.

### ***NOTES***

- *Competitive Season refers to the maximum dates or contests allowed per the MHSAA.*
- *Offenses are rounded to the nearest whole number (1.4 = 1, 1.8 = 2).*
- *The athlete will be required to practice during the suspension, must attend all games, but will not be allowed to dress in uniform.*
- *Violations are cumulative through grades 6-8 for middle school and 9-12 for high school. Offenses do not carry over from middle school to high school.*

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social networking websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) are a representation of the student-athlete, along with Comstock Park Public Schools. The administrators and coaches have the right to monitor these sites and student-athletes will face discipline for conduct unbecoming of an athlete. Depending on the scope of the infraction it will be classified as level 1, 2 or 3 violations.

- **Disclosure:** Do not post information about specific student-athletes, unless it is related to an award or honor. Please follow the guidelines of FERPA and good taste.

- Sportsmanship: Don't talk about internal matters of your program, Comstock Park Public Schools, the OK Conference or the MHSAA. Practice generosity and promote your team/school, DO NOT ridicule or make fun of the opponents/players. Find something good to say, or don't say it. Disparaging remarks about another person's political/religion or gender are off limits. Common sense and courtesy should always prevail.
- Safety: For your own safety, please keep the following recommendations in mind as you participate in social networking websites:
  - Set your security settings so that only your friends can view your profile.
  - You should not post your email, home address, local address, telephone number(s), or other personal information as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, identity theft, etc.
  - Be aware of who you add as a friend to your site – many people are looking to take advantage of student-athletes or to seek connection with student-athletes.
  - Consider how the above behaviors can be reflected in all Facebook/Twitter applications.

### **TRANSFERS**

Comstock Park Public Schools 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 at a previously attended school.

A student who transfers to Comstock Park High School after becoming ineligible because of a student or athletic code violation at a previously attended school shall remain ineligible at Comstock Park for not less than the period of ineligibility imposed by the previously attended school. This would be the case even if the student's situation would otherwise satisfy one or more of the exceptions to the transfer regulation of Comstock Park Schools and the Michigan High School Athletic Association, and even if the act which caused the student's ineligibility at the previous school would not be a violation or cause the same period of ineligibility at Comstock Park High School.

That student was subject to the rules and penalties of the previous school and shall not be allowed to escape the consequences of his/her conduct and, in doing so, displace students of Comstock Park from teams, positions, events and awards at least until the full period of ineligibility has been served.

### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/PROCEDURE**

1. Eligibility will be checked weekly for all in-season athletes; weekly for at-risk students with two or more D's or one failing(59.9%) grade.

2. Athletes with more than one failing (59.9%) grade are ineligible to participate in competitive events until the next eligibility check (weekly).
3. Athletes must earn credit in four (4) out of six (6) classes or five (5) out of seven (7) classes (depending on the athlete's schedule) at the semester. Failure to meet this requirement will render the athlete ineligible to participate in any athletic team for one full semester. Athletic eligibility may be reinstated at the discretion of the Athletic Director once credit has been earned.

### **MHSAA ELIGIBILITY RULES**

1. Students must meet all eligibility requirements of the Michigan High School Athletic Association to participate in athletic programs at Comstock Park.
2. Students who transfer after the beginning of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year must be cleared by the Athletic Office before participating in athletic programs at Comstock Park.

### **ADDITIONAL RULES**

1. Athletes must use district transportation when provided to and from all contests unless the parent requests alternate arrangements in advance using the approved process through the athletic department. Individual coaches may establish rules/expectations requiring athletes to ride the bus to and from all contests. While riding district transportation athletes are expected to follow all rules established by the coach, the driver, and the Comstock Park Transportation Department.
2. Athletes must attend the last four full hours during the school day to participate in a game or practice that day. Exceptions must be cleared by the Athletic Director prior to the absence. Exceptions are:
  - a. Documented funeral
  - b. School business
  - c. Documented medical appointment
  - d. Documented, required court appointment
3. Any athlete who is not in school all day on the day immediately following an athletic contest may not practice that day. Exception: an absence may be excused in advance by the Athletic Director for valid reasons other than sickness.
4. Any athlete wishing to cease participation in a sport after joining a team shall be required to meet with the coach, explain the reason for quitting, and shall turn in all equipment. That athlete may not participate in another sport in the same season without the consent

of the coach and the Athletic Director. An athlete who quits a team may be subject to a suspension of one third of the next season of competition at the discretion of the Athletic Director and involved coach.

5. Athletes are responsible for all equipment issued to them. A replacement fee may be charged for any lost or damaged equipment (including uniforms/clothing). This fee must be paid before the athlete may participate in another sport. Uniforms are the property of the school and may be worn to school on game days only when authorized by the coach.
6. All student debts must be paid to the school before a student may participate in any extracurricular activity.
7. Each coach has the authority to establish additional rules, regulations, and expectations subject to approval of the Athletic Director. These rules must be in writing and on-file in the athletic office. Team rules may not supersede the rules, expectations, or penalties set forth in this book.
8. Students must have the appropriate physical form on file in the Athletic office prior to participation in practice (including tryouts) or games.

#### **HANDICAPPED AND/OR DISABLED STUDENT AWARD POLICY**

1. Special consideration will be given to handicapped or disabled students who are not able to participate in school sponsored athletic programs but do participate in programs that have been adapted to allow for participation.
2. The sport must be a sport offered by Comstock Park Public Schools and recognized by the Board of Education as a varsity program.
3. All code of conduct rules and expectations must be met.
4. Decisions regarding eligibility for awards will be made on an individual basis by the Athletic Director. Application for such awards must be made in writing prior to participation.

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Any person believing that the Comstock Park Public School District or any part of the school organization has inadequately applied the principles and /or regulations of (1) Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, (2) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (3) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 or (4) Title II of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 may bring forward a complaint, which shall be referred to as a grievance, to the local Coordinator at the following address:

101 School Street

Comstock Park, MI 49321  
(616) 254-5001