

*GULL LAKE  
ATHLETICS*

*GRADUATING LEADERS*



*ATHLETIC HANDBOOK*

*Updated February 2021*

## **ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

Although the information in this athletic handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, it is not intended to be all-encompassing or to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise. This handbook does not create a “contract” with parents, student-athletes, or staff, and the administration may make decisions and rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based on applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations. The administration reserves the right to contact the Michigan High School Athletic Association for assistance with any matter. If any provision in this athletic handbook is inconsistent with an MHSAA rule, the MHSAA rule controls.

## **PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE**

Programs of excellence transcend the individuals that comprise teams. Programs are built through pride and reputation. Programs of excellence transcend time. It is the intent of Gull Lake Community Schools to provide programs of excellence.

Each student-athlete must maintain a high degree of physical fitness and alertness to perform to his or her optimal capacity and with the greatest degree of safety in his or her chosen sport. He or she must therefore adhere to self-imposed discipline and demonstrate the highest standards of character in his or her chosen sport. Clear and consistent boundaries are established to assist student-athletes in maintaining self-discipline. This athletic handbook communicates those boundaries. It is not designed to punish our student-athletes but to deter their involvement in the risky and dangerous behaviors. It is a means of communicating clear expectations for students’ on and off field behavior in which our community can take pride. It is not easy to be part of and contribute to programs of excellence.

Programs of excellence have traditions of success. The desire to win comes with the understanding that to do so, to reach individual and team success, student-athletes must work toward and make decisions that help them reach full potential. When student-athletes put on the blue and white, it is assumed that they understand the traditions of excellence that have been established and accept the responsibilities that go with them.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF A STUDENT-ATHLETE**

Athletics is an important component of a student’s high school career. **Participation is a privilege that must be earned.** Student-athletes at Gull Lake Community Schools represent the school district, student body and community; hence they are held to high standards of expectations for academic performance and behavior. Athletes must recognize that they have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on their teammates, coaches, the Southwest Michigan Athletic Conference, Gull Lake Community Schools and the greater Gull Lake community.

**Responsibility to Self** - The most important of these responsibilities is to broaden and develop strength of character. Student-athletes owe it to themselves to derive the greatest benefits from their high school experiences, to live a healthy lifestyle, and to respect their physical and mental health at all times.

**Responsibility to Academic Studies** - Academic studies and participation in other extracurricular activities, as well as athletics, prepare student-athletes for life as an adult. Athletics, while very important to many young people, are only a small part of a student-athlete's life. It is important to understand how few student-athletes participate in college athletics and beyond. As a result, academic achievement better prepares a student-athlete for his or her adult life than athletic achievement.

**Responsibility to School** – Gull Lake Community Schools cannot maintain programs of excellence unless all student-athletes participate, to the best of their abilities, in every practice, competition, and other activity in which they are engaged.

**Responsibility to Family** - Student-athletes who never give their parents and family anything to be ashamed or embarrassed of will have measured up to this ideal. Student-athletes who know in their heart that they have lived up to all the training rules, have practiced every day to the best of their ability, have played the game all out and have displayed good sportsmanship, foster self-respect and the pride of their families, win or lose.

**Responsibility to Community** - The community and its financial support make athletic experiences possible. For that reason, student-athletes must remember they hold a clear and substantial responsibility to their community. Student-athletes assume a leadership role when they participate on an athletic team. The student body and citizens of the community know Gull Lake's student-athletes. They are visible and judged by their conduct and attitude both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, student-athletes can contribute significantly to school spirit and community pride. It is the desire and expectation of Gull Lake Community Schools that its student-athletes demonstrate class and sportsmanship, not for the fact that they win, but rather that they are known as participants in programs of character and excellence.

**Responsibility to Younger Athletes** - The younger athletes in the Gull Lake Community School District watch and look up to student-athletes on school teams. They know who the players are and what they do. Varsity athletes are role models for those in younger programs and all student-athletes are role models for those in youth programs throughout our community. Make them proud. Do not do anything to let them down. Set good examples for them.

## **THE COACH AND HIS/HER PLAYERS**

In the relationship with players under their care, coaches should always be aware of the tremendous influence they wield, for good or bad. Parents entrust their dearest possessions to the coach's charge. The coaches through their own example, must always be sure that the students who have played under them are finer and more decent people for having done so. Coaches should never place the value of a win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in their players. There may be times in which a player or parent believes this

is the case. The coach must be aware of this attitude. The safety and welfare of the players should always be uppermost in the coach's mind, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR COACHES**

Coaches are educators and therefore are to be dedicated to more than the X's and O's of competition. As less than 2% of high school athletes go on to play sports at the college level, coaches must understand that high school athletics provide student-athletes a unique opportunity for the development of not only physical conditioning and athletic skill but also character traits essential for success in life. Recognizing his or her role as an educator, coaches are expected to:

- Exemplify the highest moral character as a role model for young people.
- Recognize the individual worth and reinforce the self-image of each team member.
- Establish a realistic team goal or vision for each season and communicate that to the athletes and parents.
- Encourage and assist team members in setting personal goals to achieve their highest academic potential.
- Strive to develop the qualities of competence, character, civility, and citizenship in each team member.
- Provide a safe, challenging, and encouraging environment for practice and competition.
- Gain an awareness of the importance of prevention, care, and treatment of athletic injuries.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
- Teach and abide by the rules of the game in letter and spirit.
- Build and maintain ethical relationships with coaches and administrators.
- Strive for excellence in coaching skills and techniques through professional improvement.
- Promote personal fitness and good nutrition.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Support and reinforce the expectations set out in the Athletic Code of Conduct.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS**

Parents play a vital role in the development of their child's character and decision-making skills as well as the development of his or her athletic ability. A student-athlete's success, his or her team's success, and ultimately the athletic program's success, is a partnership between the student-athlete, his or her parent(s), the coach, and the athletic administration. Recognizing parent's important role in the success of their student-athletes, it is expected parents will:

- Be a positive role model so that, through their actions, they can help make sure their student-athlete(s) has the best athletic experience possible.
- Be a "team" fan, not a "my kid" fan.
- Weigh what their student-athlete(s) says in any controversy, rather than rushing to judgment.
- Show respect for the opposing players, coaches, and fans.
- Be respectful of all officials' decisions.

- Not instruct their student-athlete(s) before or after a game, because it may conflict with the coach's plans and strategies.
- Praise their student-athlete(s) in his or her attempts to improve as a student, as an athlete, and as a person.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the sport in which their student-athlete(s) competes.
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team.
- Help their student-athlete(s) learn that success is experienced in the development of skills and that an individual can feel positive about his or her skill development during the season regardless of the team's record.
- Take the time to talk with coaches in an appropriate manner, including proper time and place, if they have a concern. This includes showing respect for the coach and following the chain of command by not going first to the athletic director or building principal.
- Support the tobacco, alcohol, and other drug-free expectations of the school district by refraining from the use of any such substances before and during athletic contests.
- Support and reinforce the expectations set out in the Athletic Code of Conduct.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES**

### **RULES OF CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP FOR ATHLETIC EVENTS**

In addition to adherence to accepted crowd control measures, school districts should require fans to behave in a sportsmanlike manner which reflects positively on high school athletics. Fans who display unsportsmanlike behavior may disrupt or even endanger participants and other fans. The Gull Lake Community School District and its athletic department encourage student and adult fan participants at the district's athletic events by attending games and cheering, clapping and otherwise encouraging participants. Support, however, must be exhibited in a positive sportsmanlike manner.

The District may remove a person who attends a contest or event for unsportsmanlike behavior. The process for denying a person admission or removing a person from a contest for violation of the Athletic Department policy on Sportsmanship for Athletic events will be as follows:

1. Any person who disrupts a school event or otherwise violates the Gull Lake Community Schools philosophy on sportsmanship for athletic events as stated above will be asked to leave. If the person refuses to leave, security personnel or law enforcement will be summoned.
2. Should further denial to future athletic events be necessary because of the initial actions of the individual, a "Notice Violation" form will be sent to the individual that will lay out the remaining actions to be taken.
3. Actions including, but not limited to the following, could result in removal from a contest:
  - a. Using vulgar or obscene language
  - b. Possessing or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance

- c. Possessing a weapon without a permit.
- d. Fighting or otherwise striking or threatening another person
- e. Failing to obey the instructions of a security officer or school district employee

There may be other, separate reasons to exclude a person from a contest or event, which will be handled by the District's central administration.

## **GULL LAKE ATHLETIC CODE**

All students participating in athletics shall abide by the Gull Lake Community Schools Athletic code. The Athletic Code will be in effect from August 1 to July 31 for all students who participate in athletics in that school year. Any student, who violates the Athletic Code within one year prior to their participation in any athletics at Gull Lake Community Schools will be subject to the conditions and consequences outlined in the Athletic Code.

### **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES:**

All Gull Lake Community School Athletes are expected to:

1. Maintain their grades and scholastic performance in accordance with school policy and procedures to maintain their eligibility.
2. Attend classes two full blocks to be eligible to practice or compete that day.
3. Uphold and promote the traditions of good sportsmanship and fair play at all times and to exhibit a positive attitude at school and on the field.
4. Respect all school property, especially property assigned to them and the team for use during the sport season. Students will be financially responsible for all equipment checked out to them.
5. Follow the specific rules established by the coaching staff for each sport regarding attendance and participation in practices, scholastic training standards, grooming and dress codes.
6. The school dress code will be enforced throughout the sports seasons and pertain to each athletic team. It will be allowable for student-athletes to wear game or competition style clothing during practice. Therefore, the dress code is in full effect, i.e., sports bras must be covered shirts must be worn. This is both for the protection of our students as well as the image that we would like our student-athletes to possess.
7. The dress and grooming of athletes will always be in accordance with team policy. Remember, you are representing Gull Lake Community Schools.
8. Dropping out of a sport without a valid reason is always considered a serious matter. If an athlete wants to quit any sport, he/she should notify the coach and return all equipment. If an athlete does quit a sport, he/she will not be permitted to try-out for another sport until the conclusion of that sport which the athlete has quit. Also, an athlete may not participate in any organized off season conditioning for another sport in which the person desires to try out for at Gull Lake that our coaches are conducting.
9. Other routine team rules regarding missing practice, arriving late for practice, not carrying out assignments, etc., may be established and enforced by respective coaches.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS FOR ATHLETES

All Gull Lake student-athletes are expected to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to behave (on and off the field) in a manner that reflects positively on their team, Gull Lake Community Schools and the community.

### **Tier 1 – *Use or Possession of Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping or Drugs; Hazing; and Misdemeanor Offenses or Arrests***

The use or possession of alcohol, tobacco or drugs (including performance enhancing drugs) will not be tolerated at any time. Students who use marijuana for medicinal purposes are not eligible to participate in athletics.

Hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of initiation, membership, or affiliation with any athletic team. Any hazing activity; whether by an individual or by a group; shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student-athlete willingly participates. The Gull Lake Community School District prohibits any form of initiation or harassment, known as hazing, as part of any school sponsored activity. No student-athlete, coach, volunteer, or district employee shall plan, direct, encourage, assist, or engage in any hazing activity. Nor will acts that result in the student-athlete being arrested by law enforcement be condoned. As it has been determined that athletic participation is a privilege and not a right, it is to be understood that there will be no obligation on the part of the administration, in response to the arrest of a student-athlete, to wait for the judicial process to run its course. Therefore, even while charges are pending and adjudicated, the athlete will be suspended and participation will be denied.

### **Tier 1 Consequences:**

- **First Offense:** The student-athlete will be suspended\* for 50% of the scheduled competitions of that season\*\*. In cases related to drugs and/or alcohol if the student agrees to a substance abuse assessment by a certified agency or health professional the suspension will be reduced to 30% of the scheduled competitions, following receipt of written confirmation of this assessment.

The Guidance Office will meet with the parent or guardian, student and other personnel, as deemed necessary, to provide recommendations for this assessment and assist in the scheduling. The athlete and/or family will be responsible for any fee(s) for the assessment.

- **Second Offense:** The student-athlete will be suspended from athletic participation for one calendar year following the violation. In cases related to drugs and/or alcohol if the student agrees to a second substance abuse assessment by the same certified agency or health professional as their first assessment the suspension will be reduced to 50% of the calendar year, following receipt of written confirmation of this assessment.

The Guidance Office will meet with the parent or guardian, student and other personnel, as deemed necessary, to provide recommendations for this assessment and assist in the

scheduling. The athlete and/or their family will be responsible for any fee(s) for the assessment.

- **Third Offense:** The student-athlete is suspended from any current athletic team and will not be allowed to participate in any other athletic teams at Gull Lake High School for the remainder of his/her high school career.

\*Students under suspension, but still able to participate in the remaining season contests are expected to continue to participate in practice in order to maintain conditioning and eligibility for play. Students who do not participate in practice may be removed from the team.

\*\*These suspensions shall be based on the complete schedule and not the remaining season. If less than the stated percentage remains for the sport season, then the student shall be removed from the team immediately and the remaining percentage suspension carried over to the next sport season that the student participates in, on a pro-rated basis.

\*\***Possession or use of tobacco and vaping** will carry a penalty of 10% for the first offense, 30% for the second offense, and a full school year (180 days) for the third offense.

## ***Tier 2 – Distribution of Alcohol or Drugs and Felony Offenses, Excessive Violence***

Athletes committing very serious training rule violations, violent or serious criminal acts will be suspended immediately from the team, pending a meeting with the Athletic Director. A student-athlete who reaches Tier 2 will be immediately removed from the current team and may be ineligible to participate in athletics in the Gull Lake Community School District for the remainder of his or her high school career pending a meeting with the athletic director, principal and/or superintendent.

Examples of conduct requiring this action include:

1. Sale or distribution of drugs
2. Gross or dangerous misconduct under game conditions or on school property
3. Involvement in felonious activity
4. Excessive violence (e.g. fighting)

Severe violations can also include the use of illegal substances. It is impossible to produce a complete list however a partial list is available in the Gull Lake Athletic Office.

The distribution or sale of alcohol or drugs (including performance enhancing drugs) is viewed as more serious than the use or possession of those substances. Similarly, acts that result in a student athlete being arrested by law enforcement for felony offenses are viewed as acts that require immediate and permanent suspension from participation. As stated in Tier 1, athletic participation is a privilege and not a right; it is to be understood that there will be no obligation on the part of the administration, in response to the arrest of a student-athlete, to wait for the judicial process to run its course. Therefore, even while felony charges are pending and adjudicated, all forms of participation will be denied.

In all cases of suspension, the athlete's parents or guardians will be notified in writing of the suspension as detailed in the section entitled CONSISTENCY/PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE ATHLETIC CODE.

## **INTERVENTIONS/STUDENT ASSISTANCE**

As education is the major component of the athletic program, the opportunity exists to teach that part of one's character is not whether or not you made a mistake, but whether you admit to and learn from that mistake. So, to encourage honesty and cooperation, the athletic director has the authority to reduce a Tier 1-Offense 1 or 2 penalty up to half the original number of contests for any student-athlete who admits to a violation of the athletic code prior to the athletic director finding out a violation has occurred or when initially confronted by the athletic director. No reduction of a Tier 1-Offense 3 or Tier 2 penalty will be permitted for a self-admission.

Though it is expected, it is understood that a student-athlete, either one alleged to have committed a violation or one interviewed regarding a violation, does not have to be cooperative during an investigation. It should be similarly understood that the athletic director does not have to allow an uncooperative student-athlete to practice or compete until such time as the matter is resolved or at any point thereafter.

Therefore, if at any time during an investigation, either prior to or after the determination of guilt and/or consequences, it is determined that a student athlete has lied, been deceptive, untruthful, or withheld information, the athletic director has within his or her power to impose a greater level of consequence. Great weight must be placed on the privilege of representing the Gull Lake community and any student-athlete who would fail to be truthful and/or cooperative would jeopardize the perceived character of Gull Lake programs.

As stated in the Behavioral Expectations above, it is in the student-athlete and parents or guardians best interest to have the guidance office involved in the first offense and continue to be involved if the student-athlete commits further offenses. The Gull Lake Community School District believes that any violation involving tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs, and other illegal substances warrants an assessment by a trained professional. Therefore, the Guidance Office will counsel the student when any offense is committed and will offer recommendations appropriate to the need. This may include referral to the Student Assistance Program. The recommended policy clearly states an outside professional assessment is in the best interest of the student/athlete and reductions in consequences are based on the completion of an assessment.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

All coaches shall hold a mandatory meeting with parents or guardians of the student-athletes. This may be accomplished by holding a meeting for all the fall sports, a meeting for all the winter sports and a meeting for all the spring sports. The Athletic Code of Conduct will be discussed with the parents/guardians. Prior to participating for the school year, the student-athlete and parents/guardians will be required to sign indicating they received the Athletic Code of Conduct and will abide by all of the rules and regulations contained within. This is most

important as it is proactive with the parents of the student-athlete. The parents or guardians will continue to sign off on the Student/Parent Medical Consent (Physical) form.

When a student commits an offense of the Athletic Code the following communication will be carried out:

### ***First Offense***

The Athletic Director/Coach will contact the parent or guardian by phone or email informing them of the violation and the consequences. A letter will be forwarded stating the violation and consequences along with a copy of the Disciplinary Action Form. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Counseling Office.

### ***Second Offense***

Same procedure as in *First Offense*

### ***Third Offense***

The Athletic Director will send a letter to the parents or guardians' indicating the student is no longer eligible as an athlete at Gull Lake, explaining the consequences of the third violation. A copy of the Disciplinary Action Form will be included with the letter. Information will be provided regarding the appeal process. Copies of all information will be forwarded to the Guidance Office, Principal and Superintendent.

## **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

The purpose of the Gull Lake Athletic Board is to handle appeals of disciplinary decisions made by the Athletic Director. The Board will have five (5) members selected from the following groups: 1 High School teacher, 3 High School coaches (excluding coaches from athletic teams in which the student participates), 1 parent from the Gull Lake Sports Boosters.

The Board will be chaired and the meetings facilitated by the Gull Lake High School Athletic Director, who will NOT be a voting member of the Board.

1. The student-athlete and their parents or guardians may appeal any disciplinary decision of the Athletic Director to the Gull Lake Athletic Board. The request for an appeal must be made *in writing* within 2 school days of receipt of the written decision of the Athletic Director.
2. The Athletic Board will review the decision of the Athletic Director within one week of the request. The Board can affirm or reduce the disciplinary action of the Athletic Director. The decision of the Board will be provided in writing to the student, parents or guardians and the Athletic Director.
3. An appeal of the Athletic Board decision may be made to the High School Principal within two school days after the receipt of the decision. The Principal can affirm or modify the decision of the Athletic Board and will provide a written response within one week of the request to the student, parents/guardians, Athletic Director and Athletic Board.

4. An appeal of the Principal's decision may be made to the Superintendent of Gull Lake Schools within two school days of the receipt of the decision. The Superintendent can affirm or modify the decision of the Principal and will provide a written response within one week of the request to the student, parents or guardians, Athletic Director, Athletic Board and Principal.
5. A final appeal may be made to the Board of Education within 10 days of the decision of the Superintendent of Schools.

## **SCHOLASTIC STANDARDS FOR STUDENT/ATHLETES**

### **SCHOLASTIC EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS FOR ATHLETES**

The Gull Lake Community School district believes that all athletes are students first. Hence, the Scholastic Standards are designed to hold the student accountable in the classroom, promote academic performance and reinforce the school district mission that all students grow collectively in knowledge, skills, cultural appreciation, civil and personal responsibility.

## **HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

### **CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY**

All students promoted to the 9th grade will be considered academically eligible for athletics. All transfer (after 1<sup>st</sup> day as freshman) or currently enrolled students must pass and must not have failed more than 1 class. Transfer students who are not academically eligible at the beginning of the **trimester** shall be considered ineligible for participation in athletics until the beginning of the next **trimester**. Summer school may be used to determine eligibility for fall competition provided the summer class has been completed and the grade posted prior to fall sports beginning.

### **CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

Student eligibility for athletics will be assessed at the end of each trimester. Students will be ineligible for athletics if they fail two or more classes at the end of a trimester at the high school level. (For details regarding Academic Probation, please see Consequences below).

### **MONITORING OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The ability for parents and students to monitor student grades through the school's on line grading system is paramount for those parties to determine where they stand in each class. Several times during a trimester, academic monitoring will be used by the athletic department to indicate students who are "at risk" of academic ineligibility. Students who receive a grade of D+, D, or D- in any class will be considered to be "at risk" of academic ineligibility. The Athletic Director will notify coaches of any student(s) on their teams who are academically "at-risk" and the coach will meet with the student to discuss the importance of academic performance for their continued participation in athletics. It is also important for parents to check student's grades by using the on line grading system. Parents can contact the guidance office at the school for

information about accessing the on-line grading system. All academic “at risk” student-athletes should meet with their teachers to identify the causes of their academic difficulty and to develop a plan for improving their grades by the end of the marking period. Coaches, parents, and athletes should communicate with one another to determine how things are progressing in those situations where the student is “at risk”.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

1. At the end of the trimester, any student who has one E will be placed on Academic Probation. **The student must remain on academic probation for a minimum of five (5) school days.** During that 5-day period, the athlete may continue to practice and attend all team functions, but may not participate in any contest that the team is involved in. At the conclusion of five (5) school days, he/she will be removed from academic probation and allowed to fully participate in athletics. However, the student’s academic standing will be closely monitored with weekly checks.
2. There will be two “grade checks” during each trimester. The first grade check will be at four (4) weeks; the second grade check will be at eight (8) weeks into the trimester. Any student who receives 2 or more E’s at a grade check will also be placed on Academic Probation and be ineligible for a period of 5 school days. Those students will then be monitored each week. At the end of the 5 school day period, if a student is not passing at least four of their five classes, they will be ineligible for another 5 school day period. This process will continue for the remainder of the trimester.
3. Students who have received 2 or more E’s at the end of a trimester will be ineligible for athletic participation for the entire next trimester.

Should a senior receive an E at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester of the year, they will be ineligible for competition for 1 week if their spring season is still in progress. Two E’s would result in automatic removal from the team for those senior athletes. Also, should any other student receive an E at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester, their ineligible period would take place during the first week of the first trimester of the following school year.

Student-athletes who become scholastically ineligible at the end of the **school year** may attend summer school classes to make up lost credits provided the summer class has been completed and the grade posted prior to fall sports beginning. The student-athlete and the parent/guardian are responsible to seek assistance from the guidance office.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

### **CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY**

All students promoted to middle school will be considered academically eligible for athletics.

### **CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

Student eligibility for athletics will be assessed at the end of each trimester. Students will be ineligible for athletics if they fail three (3) or more classes at the end of a trimester at the middle school level. (For details regarding Academic Probation, please see Consequences below).

## **MONITORING OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The ability for parents and students to monitor student grades through the schools on line grading system is paramount for those parties to determine where they stand in each class. Several times during a trimester, academic monitoring will be used by the athletic department to indicate students who are “at risk” of academic ineligibility. Students who receive a grade of D+, D, or D- in any class will be considered to be “at risk” of academic ineligibility. The Athletic Director will notify coaches of any student(s) on their teams who are academically “at-risk” and the coach will meet with the student to discuss the importance of academic performance for their continued participation in athletics. It is also important for parents to check student’s grades by using the on line grading system. Parents can contact the guidance office at the school for information about accessing the online grading system. All academic “at risk” student-athletes should meet with their teachers to identify the causes of their academic difficulty and to develop a plan for improving their grades by the end of the marking period. Coaches, parents, and athletes should communicate with one another to determine how things are progressing in those situations where the student is “at risk”.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

1. At the end of the trimester, any student who has one or two E’s will be placed on Academic Probation. **The student must remain on academic probation for a minimum of seven (7) consecutive days.** During that 7-day period, the athlete may continue to practice and attend all team functions, but may not participate in any contest that the team is involved in. At the conclusion of seven (7) days, he/she will be removed from academic probation and allowed to fully participate in athletics. However, the student’s academic standing will be closely monitored with weekly checks.
2. There will be two “grade checks” during each trimester. The first grade check will be at four (4) weeks; the second grade check will be at eight (8) weeks into the trimester. Any student who has received 3 or more E’s at a grade check will also be placed on Academic Probation and be ineligible for a period of 7 days. Those students will then be monitored each week. At the end of the 7-day period, if a student is not passing at least three of their classes, they will be ineligible for another 7 day period. This process will continue for the remainder of the trimester.
3. Students who have received 3 or more E’s at the end of a trimester will be ineligible for athletic participation for the entire next trimester.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

Athletes may not participate in any sport until the following items have been completed:

1. Parent consent form on file.
2. Physical examination completed and card on file in the athletic office.
3. All eligibility requirements have been satisfied.
4. All school issued equipment and apparel has been turned in from previous sports seasons.
5. State mandated concussion-awareness documentation has been completed and received by the District in accordance with Board Policy 5712 (required annually).

## MAKING CUTS AND PLAYING TIME

Perhaps the most difficult job that a coach has is limiting the size of a team so that those who are chosen benefit the most and those MHSAA requirements for team membership are followed. A personal contact between the coach and all candidates who did not make the team should take place informing that candidate the reasons why they were not chosen for the team.

Playing time once a team has been determined is also an area that needs to be paid attention to. It is not easy for a coach to always make these decisions, but it is their job and responsibility to do so. A fan or parents displeasure about playing time can cause not only an uncomfortable feeling between the player and coach, it can also cause problems internally on a team. Therefore, all coaches, players, and parents should understand the following:

1. It shall be the policy of the Gull Lake athletic department for coaches not to be “second guessed” on a players playing time and any concerns that take place should be done in the following manner:
  - a. Step One: Player should communicate directly with their coach.
  - b. Step Two: If player needs more clarification, the parent and player should meet with the coach.
  - c. Step Three: Should no resolution be attainable after steps one and two the parent is then to contact the athletic director and a meeting time should be set up that is suitable for all parties.
  - d. It is a requirement that the student-athlete be present at any meeting relating to playing time or the player’s role on the team
2. Sub-varsity teams shall permit each member that has attended all practices and who has conformed to all team policies to have game playing time each week. Should parents have a concern with a coach, that parent should contact the coach first. Should no resolution be attainable, the parent is then to contact the athletic director and a meeting time should be set up that is suitable for all parties.

## ATHLETIC AWARDS SYSTEM

**Freshmen:** A freshmen certificate and numerals will be presented to each freshman who completes the season in good standing and is recommended by the coach. Freshmen playing on a JV team will still be given the numerals.

**Junior Varsity:** A JV certificate plus the Blue Devil chenille will be awarded to each athlete who completes the season in good standing and recommended by the coach. Athletes who participated on the J.V. team as a freshman will receive their graduation numerals. A second season on a J.V. team would result in their Blue Devil chenille.

**Varsity:** A Varsity certificate plus a 6” chenille letter will be awarded to each athlete who completes the season in good standing and recommended by the coach. Should an athlete receive a varsity letter before the freshmen numerals or the J.V. patch, they will receive the numerals when they do compete in a J.V. sport or when they earn a varsity letter for the second time. That

same athlete would receive the Blue Devil patch following their receipt of their varsity letter and numerals. A student could indeed receive freshmen numerals in the fall, a patch in the winter, and a varsity letter in the spring. However, the varsity letter is the ultimate in awards and will be provided when they receive their first varsity letter status. Each athlete will only receive one 6" chenille varsity letter.

**Special Awards:** Earning 2 letters in each of 3 different sports in both the junior and senior years, plus participation in at least 3 years in one of those lettered sports, a recognition plaque will be awarded. Earning 4 letters in one sport, a trophy or plaque will also be awarded following their senior year.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL AWARD CANDIDATES**

1. All candidates must be recommended for the award by the team coach and approved by the Director of Athletics.
2. Candidates must have excellent practice and game attendance record for the complete season.
3. Any athlete who is suspended for any violation AND who does not finish the season on the team will not be eligible to receive an award for that season.

## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH SPORT**

**FOOTBALL:** An athlete must participate in nine (9) quarters and/or be recommended by the coaching staff. Any athlete who, at the discretion of the Athletic Director and coach, would have won a varsity letter if he had not been injured.

**CROSS-COUNTRY:** An athlete must complete the season and finish in the top seven in at least 25 percent of the meets to receive a Varsity Letter. An athlete who completes the season shall receive the J.V. award.

**BOYS/GIRLS GOLF:** Athletes must participate in 25 percent of scheduled varsity matches. Any senior who has been in the golf program for 3 seasons will be awarded a varsity letter.

**TENNIS:** Athletes participate in 25 percent of scheduled varsity matches to earn a varsity letter. Any senior who has participated in the tennis program for 3 seasons will be awarded a varsity letter.

**BASKETBALL:** Athletes must be a member of the varsity team and complete the season in good standing\*. Athletes brought up for post-season tournament play will normally NOT be awarded a varsity letter.

**SOCCER:** Athletes must participate in 25 percent of all scheduled contests. Any senior who has participated in the soccer program for 3 seasons will be awarded a varsity letter.

**WRESTLING:** In order to earn a varsity letter for the sport of wrestling, the athlete must accumulate 50 or more points during the course of a season and finish the season *in good standing*. Should an athlete fall short of earning 50 points, all of his points will be carried over to

the next season. Seniors who have competed for the wrestling season for at least two seasons will automatically be eligible for a letter if he finishes the season *in good standing* regardless of points.

Below is the breakdown for how points are earned:

Varsity weigh-in 1 pt

Win by **Forfeit** 2 pts

Win by **Decision** 2 pts

Win by **Major Decision** 3 pts

Win by **Technical Fall/Pin** 5 pts

Individual Tournament Placement---**1st** 10 pts

Individual Tournament Placement---**2nd** 8 pts

Individual Tournament Placement---**3rd** 6 pts

Conference, Individual District or Regional--**4th** 4 pts

**VOLLEYBALL:** Athlete's on the varsity team that finish the season in good standing\* will receive a Varsity award. A senior completing a third year of volleyball will be awarded a varsity letter.

**COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING:** Athletes must be a member of the varsity team and complete the season in good standing\*.

**BASEBALL/SOFTBALL:** An athlete who completes the season in good standing will receive a varsity award. Seniors who have been involved in either Softball or Baseball for three years will be awarded a varsity letter. Injuries incurred during the season will not prevent any player from receiving a letter.

**BOYS AND GIRLS TRACK:** A track participant must complete one of the following: 1) Earn 10 or more varsity points. 2) A senior completing a third year in track. 3) A senior earning six or more points and is recommended by the coach. 4) Place in the top five in either the conference or regional meet.

**BOWLING:** An athlete that attends 75% of the practices and competes in 25% of competitions will receive a varsity letter. All others will receive a J.V. Letter.

**MANAGER:** All people qualifying for a varsity letter must:

- 1) Manage a varsity team for one season and
- 2) Be recommended by the head coach

\* Good Standing refers to:

- Remaining a member of the team the entire season
- Having no Tier One or Tier Two infractions of the handbook
- Turning in all school issued equipment

## **MHSAA SUMMARY OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

These rules apply to all member high schools having tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades and to member junior high/middle schools and senior high schools in which the ninth grade may be combined with any or all of those grades, both for boys and girls interscholastic athletic competition. The ninth graders will use senior high school eligibility rules except when participating with or against seventh or eighth graders. The ninth graders must not have reached their sixteenth birthday prior to September 1 of the current year that they enroll in the 9th grade. Interpretations under each section cannot cover all possible cases that will arise. They will aid in answering eligibility questions but do not in any sense take the place of the rule itself. Major reference should be to the rule rather than to the interpretations. The summaries are condensed statements of the complete rule for quick reference.

**ENROLLMENT:** Have been enrolled in a high school by Monday of fourth (4th) week of present semester.

**AGE:** Be under nineteen (19) years of age at time of contest unless nineteenth (19) birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year, in which case student is eligible for balance of that school year in all sports.

**PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS:** Have passed a current year physical examination. Record must be on file in school office. The mid-April of previous year initial physical date must be adhered to.

**SEASONS OF COMPETITION:** Have not more than four (4) first and four (4) second semester seasons of competition in a sport in a four (4) year high school or three (3) first and second semester seasons each, in a sport in a three (3) year high school, including present season.

When two seasons leading to a state championship of the same sport are offered, an athlete may participate in only one.

**SEMESTERS OF ENROLLMENT:** Not have been enrolled for more than twelve (12) trimesters in grades nine to twelve (9-12), inclusive. Seventh and eighth (7 and 8) semesters must be consecutive. Three weeks enrollment or participation in one (1) or more athletic contests constitutes a semester of enrollment.

**UNDERGRADUATE STANDING:** Not be a high school graduate.

**PREVIOUS SEMESTER RECORD:** Have received credit in at least 66% of student's classes taken during the previous semester of enrollment.

**TRANSFERS:** Generally, have had an accompanying change of residence by the athlete's parent, guardian, or other persons with whom the athlete has been living during the period of his or her last high school enrollment, into the district or service area of the school, to be eligible during the first semester in attendance. Many other stipulations and exceptions do occur. Please contact the Athletic Director for further information.

**AWARDS:** Must not have accepted any award or merchandise exceeding \$40.00 in value for athletic performance. Athletes accepting memberships, privileges, services, negotiable certificates of money are in violation.

**AMATEUR PRACTICES:** Not have accepted money, merchandise, memberships, privileges, services, or other valuable consideration for participating in any form of athletics, sports, or games, or for officiating interscholastic athletic contest.

**LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP:** Not have participated in any outside competition in a sport **during the school season** after the athlete has represented his/her school in that sport except individual sports meets or contests; not have participated in a so-called all-star, charity, or exhibition football, basketball or ice hockey game during the school year.

## **GENERAL POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

**ADVANCEMENT OF ATHLETES:** Generally speaking, freshmen teams are for the freshmen, J.V. teams are for the freshmen/sophomores, and Varsity teams are for the juniors and seniors. If an athlete is moved up to the varsity from the 9th or J.V. teams, it should be with the understanding that he/she will play--**not just ride the bench**. Any such advancement of players shall be done with the knowledge and approval of the Athletic Director, Head Coach of the sport involved, and parents of the player involved.

**LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION:** All Gull Lake High School athletes will be limited to participation in one sport per season. Any exception to this rule must be made with the approval of the Athletic director, High School Principal, Coaches of the participating teams, and parents of the athlete involved.

**LIMITATIONS OF MEMBERS ON A TEAM:** The coaches of respective sports and the Athletic Director will determine minimum and maximum team membership limits. In some cases a "cut" process will be utilized. The coaches should keep the Director of Athletics informed concerning the method and time of "cuts."

### **WEARING OF TATTOOS:**

Any athlete who currently has a permanent tattoo on his/her body that is not school appropriate, they must either have it removed from their body, cover it with clothing, or wear a flesh colored patch to cover it.

## **SEVERE WEATHER POLICY**

The SMAC Conference schools will each honor the respective weather policies of the other league schools. The M.H.S.A.A. has adopted a policy which will, in most cases, support local policy.

**THREATENING WEATHER:** Coaches should have team members under close supervision. All teams should have “on site” practice sessions. Track and cross country coaches should keep athletes in one practice area--don’t have them running off campus alone. Good judgment should be made.

**THUNDERSTORMS:** Whenever lightning is seen or thunder is heard, there is no difference between the two in terms of action. Teams are to be removed from the outdoor playing area immediately and taken to a safe environment by their coach. Teams should not return to the field until 30 minutes has passed since the last occurrence of either lightning or thunder.

**TORNADO WATCH:** If practice sessions have not yet begun, all indoor and outdoor practice sessions will be canceled and the athletes should be sent home if they are at school. If practices have already begun and the weather is extremely poor and threatening making travel unsafe, outdoor practices should be canceled immediately and kids should be taken inside. During this time, indoor practices can continue, but any practice that has not begun yet must be canceled. All games or contests not in progress will be postponed. All outdoor games in progress will be suspended at the time of the official notification of the watch. An indoor event, if both teams are at the site, shall continue and then take immediate cover should a tornado warning occur. Postponed contests will normally be rescheduled. If unofficial word is received about the possibility of a watch existing, the coach should immediately confirm this through a media outlet.

In the case of away contests, a request will be made to suspend the contest and teams shall start the trip back to Gull Lake. This policy will also be in effect for multi-team contests. These would include, but not be limited to: Invitationals, Regional Meets, State Meets.

**TORNADO WARNING:** All team members should be taken to a safe location under the supervision of the coach, or coaches in charge. Any visiting team members and coaches should be encouraged to take cover at the site of the host school until an “all clear” is issued. The following places are to be given priority for safety: Locker Rooms and Interior Hallways.

Avoid the gym or classrooms and hallways with glass. If you are in an open area with no time to seek shelter, lay flat in the nearest depression.

**HEAT:** Gull Lake will follow the MHSAA policy regarding heat index and whether or not contests and practices will continue.

## **WHEN SCHOOL IS CLOSED DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS:**

As a general rule of thumb, coaches should not plan to practice or participate in scheduled games when school is closed or students are sent home due to inclement weather conditions. There will be times, however, when it will be possible to have some school activities even though school has been closed. With this thought in mind, all coaches should:

- A) Discuss inclement weather possibilities with team members prior to the season and review information on an occasional basis throughout the season.
- B) Have a plan for communication with team members via text, email, phone.
- C) School cancellations will be communicated through local tv stations as well as through our school messaging system.
- D) Always try to give information regarding team activities to the Principals office and A.D.'s office personnel. The kids and parents will often call for this information.
- E) Attendance at practice or games when school is canceled due to weather related issues will always be considered optional and without disciplinary consequence.

## **ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT**

### Distribution of:

All coaches must keep accurate records when equipment is assigned. Each head coach will be responsible for a system of distribution and record keeping. At the conclusion of each season, athletes will be required to turn in all school issued uniforms and equipment. Before an athlete can begin practice or compete in events for a new sport, all such items must be returned to the coach whom they had previously participated with. If items have been lost or misplaced, the replacement value of those items must be paid before they are allowed to begin practice or participate in the new sport as well.

### Cleaning of:

In the vast majority of cases, team members will be responsible for cleaning assigned uniforms and practice equipment. Coaches should make a special effort to clarify with athletes any washing instructions. All practice gear and uniforms are to be cleaned and stored at the end of each season.

### Loss of:

Athletes will be expected to pay for lost or stolen equipment. It shall be the coach's responsibility to take all necessary steps to insure the return of all equipment or secure payment for the same. Information regarding cost of equipment can be obtained from the office of the Athletic Director.

Wearing of:

Team uniforms and practice equipment are the property of the Gull Lake Community Schools and are not to be worn by anyone other than the athlete to whom the equipment was issued.

**ATHLETES SHOULD ONLY WEAR EQUIPMENT FOR SCHOOL PURPOSES AS DESIGNATED BY THE COACH. IT SHOULD NOT BE WORN FOR SOCIAL PURPOSES.**

Athletic Facilities:

The custodial, maintenance and grounds personnel will do what is possible to maintain and prepare our athletic facilities. In some cases, it will be necessary for coaches to assist in the maintenance and preparation of facilities.

## **PURCHASE OF ATHLETIC EQUIPMENT**

Only those items approved for purchase will be paid for by the Gull Lake Athletic Department. Any items ordered by coaches such as shirts, jackets, promotional materials, etc., will be paid for by the coach placing the order. This policy applies to all items without exception.

## **STUDENT TRAVEL**

All athletes are expected to travel to away contests with the team. Any exception to this rule must be for good reason and have the approval of the coach or Athletic Director.

Athletes and coaching staff shall be punctual and ready to leave at the scheduled departure time.

Coaches shall present a list to the instructional staff of all athletes who will be missing school time because of the athletic trip. This must be communicated to the teaching staff and attendance office at least 24 hours before the trip.

Coaches should see that all athletes complete classroom work on a make-up basis