



## **DOWAGIAC UNION HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Revised May 2018**

The Dowagiac Union Schools' Athletic Department is committed to providing equal opportunities in a safe, positive environment while encouraging student-athletes to fully develop socially, emotionally, academically and athletically.

As a member of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), Dowagiac Union High School and its students abide by all MHSAA regulations as listed in the MHSAA Handbook for the current school year.

*NOTE: All parents and athletes should be familiar with the Dowagiac Union High School Student Handbook. This Athletic Code of Conduct does not supersede school discipline and regulations. In addition, each team coach may choose to establish additional rules and requirements for his/her specific teams. Athletes must observe these rules as well as those listed here.*

## **Section I: Eligible for Participation**

To be eligible for interscholastic athletics, a student must comply with the following requirements:

- A. **AGE:** A student who competes in any interscholastic athletic contest cannot reach his/her nineteenth (19) birthday before September 1 of the current academic school year.
- B. **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS:** A student must have a physical examination by a physician (M.D., D.O., P.A., or NP) certifying that the student is fully able to compete in athletics. This physical must take place after April 15th or later to be used for the current school year. The student shall not participate in any practice sessions or contests until the completed form is on file in the Athletic Office.
- C. **ENROLLMENT:** Students must be enrolled in school prior to the fourth Friday after Labor Day (1st semester) or the fourth Friday of February (2nd semester) or move into the school district with his/her parent or guardian with who they last lived. A student must be enrolled in the school for which he/she competes.
- D. **SEMESTERS OF ENROLLMENT:** Students cannot be eligible for interscholastic athletic participation for more than eight (8) semesters, and seventh and eighth semester must be consecutive.
- E. **AWARDS/AMATEURISM:** Students cannot receive money or other valuable consideration for participating in MHSAA sponsored sports or officiating in interscholastic athlete contests , except as allowed by the MHSAA Handbook. Students may accept, for participation in MHSAA sponsored sports, a symbolic or merchandise award that does not have a fair market value or cost in excess of \$25.00.

## **Section II: Conduct of an Athlete**

The conduct of an athlete is closely observed in many areas of life. It is important that his/her behavior be above reproach.

- A. **ON THE FIELD/COURT:** In athletic competition a real athlete does not use profanity or illegal tactics and learns that losing is part of the game and that one should be gracious in defeat and modest in victory. It is always courteous to congratulate the opponent on a well-played game after a contest, whether in defeat or victory. True athletes have complete control of themselves at all times. They do not display fits of temper, clowning, taunting and/or other inappropriate behavior. Improper, immature behavior is a direct reflection on the school, team, and coaches and will not be tolerated. Officials in a game are there for the purpose of ensuring equality for both teams. Officials do not lose a game. It is athletic tradition that no one, except the appointed captain, talks to the official and he/she should speak in a tone of respect for the purpose of clarifying a rule. *Note: A student-athlete may receive disciplinary action for displaying poor sportsmanship during any practice or athletic contest. This includes but is not limited to: game ejections, unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, technical fouls, disrespect toward any coach, teacher*

*or other school personnel, disrespect toward an official, or fighting during and athletic contest.*

- B. IN THE CLASSROOM:** An exemplary athlete with true competitive spirit will exhibit positive learning behaviors in the classroom. Athletes must plan their schedules so that they have sufficient time and energy for their studies. An athlete should have a good attendance record and should never cut classes or school
- C. ON THE CAMPUS:** The way an athlete acts and looks on the campus is of great importance. Athletes should be leaders and worthy of respect from their fellow students. Students involved in athletics are expected to represent the highest ideals of character by exemplifying good conduct and good citizenship.

### **ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES TO SELF**

The most important responsibility of an athlete is to broaden oneself and develop strength of character. The goal is to get the greatest possible benefit from high school experiences. Studies and participation in other extra-curricular activities prepare one for life experiences.

### **ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES TO SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY**

Dowagiac Union High School will maintain its position as an outstanding school as its athletes demonstrate their best in all activities. Athletes assume a leadership role and are known by the student body and citizens of the community. Athletes become role models by their conduct and attitudes, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, athletes can contribute greatly to school spirit and community pride.

### **Section III: Academic Requirements**

- A. Current Semester Record:** Academic eligibility is based on the grade checks conducted each Friday afternoon beginning the 2nd week of the school year. Academic eligibility is in effect Monday-Sunday following the weekly grade check. For example: If grade check happens on Friday the 1st, athlete will be ineligible Monday the 4th - Sunday the 10th.
  - a. A student will remain eligible if he/she is passing at least 6 out of 7 classes at the time of each grade check. Any student with two or more failing grades for any grade check, or a failing grade in a class worth more than 2 credits (i.e. Auto Shop, Culinary Arts), will be ineligible.
  - b. If a student receives a failing grade in the same class for two (2) consecutive grade checks, that student will be placed on probation for one week (until the next grade check). During this time, the student may participate in both practices and matches.
  - c. If a student receives a failing grade in the same class for three (3) consecutive grade checks, he/she will be ineligible to participate in any contest until the grade is brought up to a passing grade for the weekly grade check.

- B. Previous Semester Record:** A student must pass at least 66% of his/her classes each semester (5 out of 7 classes) or he/she will be ineligible for the first 60 scheduled school days of the next semester, providing they are passing 66% of their classes at that time. This is an MHSAA regulation.
- C. Credit Recovery:** Student-athletes who are deemed ineligible due to failure of a course/courses for the semester can make-up credit in the following manner:
- Receive a passing grade for the Semester in classes taken through the regular (day) school curriculum offered at Dowagiac Union High School.
  - Receive a passing grade for the course from an approved online program.
  - Receive a passing grade for the course from the DUHS sponsored summer school. To receive credit from another summer school program, a student must be granted prior administrative approval.
  - A student-athlete needing credit in a core class must pass an equivalent class; A student making up credit for a non-core class can take any elective class provided credit has not been previously earned.
  - Eligibility cannot be restored until an official grade/transcript has been received by the administration.

#### **Section IV: General Rules**

- A. Attendance:** Students must attend school for the entire day in order to participate in an athletic contest or practice on the same day or evening. The only exceptions would be where prior arrangements were made, a previously scheduled professional appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours (i.e. medical, dental, legal) or in the event of an emergency. All prior arrangements and emergencies must be approved by the principal/designee or Athletic Director. All professional appointments are exempt if a note from the appointment is presented. It is not acceptable for athletes to be signed out by parents to go home to get athletic equipment during the school day. This will be an unexcused absence. (*NOTE: Attendance for a portion of the school day does not fulfill the requirements of this policy*)
- B. Suspension:** If a student-athlete is suspended out of school, they will be ineligible for all practices and contests during the term of the suspension.
- C. Practice Regulations:** Attendance at practice sessions is necessary to prepare athletes physically and mentally for athletic contests. Athletes are expected to attend all practices, as well as be punctual in attending practice. Illness or other extreme emergencies are the only acceptable reasons for missing practice. The athlete or parent should always inform the coach directly when he/she knows that it will be impossible to attend a scheduled practice. Practice schedules will be made out and athletes will be informed as to times and location of their practice by their coach each week. Each coach will set the practice/game attendance policy for his/her sport in regard to college visits, family

vacations, etc. The coach may suspend or dismiss a student from the team for chronic absenteeism or inappropriate behavior.

- D. **Established Team Roster:** Each coach is hired for his/her knowledge and expertise in each particular sport. It is at the discretion of each sport's coaching staff to decide who will be members of the team. It may be necessary to cut athletes after tryouts for a particular team. It should be noted that there is no final cut and that team members may be dropped from a squad at any time during the season.
- E. **Dropping a Sport:** Quitting a sport is highly discouraged. Once a student makes a commitment to a team, that student is expected to finish the season. Any athlete quitting a team after the season has started (1st scheduled contest date) will forfeit his/her athletic award in that sport for that season. In addition, he/she will not be permitted to participate in another sport until the season of the sport dropped is completed. By dropping a sport the athlete forfeits participation in all athletic activities including but not limited to open gyms, conditioning and weight room until the season of the sport dropped is completed. The only exception to this rule is if the student dropping the sport is mutually agreed on by the head coach of the respective sport and the Athletic Director.

If a student-athlete finds it necessary to drop a sport, the procedure for dropping a sport is the following:

1. Meet with the head coach of the particular sport and discuss the situation
2. Meet with the Athletic Director and parents (if necessary)
3. Check in all equipment issues

Failure to follow the above steps will result in the athlete not being allowed to try-out, practice or participate in any other sport until the steps are followed.

- F. **Participation in multiple sports during the same season:** It is possible for a student to play on more than one team at the same time. In order to participate in more than one sport during the same season, the student-athlete must declare a primary sport. The student must then meet with the coaches of both sports and the Athletic Director to receive permission for participation in both sports. *NOTE: Whenever there are scheduling conflicts, the athlete would be expected to participate in his/her declared primary sport.*
- G. **Game Day Dress:** Athletes assume the responsibility of representing their school and community; consequently, they are expected to dress presentably on game days for both home and away contests and at all athletic-related events. Acceptable game day attire is "business-casual" (i.e. khaki or dress pants, collared or button down shirts for boys/khaki or dress pants or skirts with top or blouse for girls) or team issued gear (in which the entire team wears the same spirit wear). Athletes can wear jeans or hooded sweatshirts only when worn as part of their spirit wear or when designated by coach as the team game day attire. Hats are not allowed on games days and hoods from sweatshirts should not be worn at any time on game days whether home or away. Athletes are issued uniforms so that appropriate dress during athletic contests is insured – students may not

alter uniforms in any way. *Note: Student-athlete attire should adhere to the dress code outlined in the DUHS Student Handbook at all times.*

**H. Equipment/Uniforms:** Student-Athletes are responsible for all equipment and uniforms issued to them. Athletic uniforms, both practice and game, are supplied for the sole purpose of athletic participation. This equipment is not to be used for any other purpose. When the season is completed, all equipment is to be returned to the coach. There are no exceptions to this policy. The theft of school equipment is larceny and Michigan Law regards larceny of property over \$100.00 as a felony. In addition, a student-athlete not returning assigned equipment/uniforms or damaging equipment/uniforms will be charged a replacement cost, which student will be required to pay. *Note: In certain instances, parents and/or the student-athlete, will be required to furnish certain personal equipment (i.e. shoes) in order to participate in a given sport.*

**I. Conflict Resolution:** An athlete and coach should first attempt to resolve any issues. If the conflict cannot be resolved between the athlete and coach, the athlete should make an appointment to meet with the Athletic Director. If the problem is still unresolved, then the parent should contact the coach. Only when the problem cannot be resolved with the coach should the parent contact the Athletic Director. These are the steps to be followed for conflict resolution:

1. Student-athlete – Head Coach
2. Student-athlete – Athletic Director
3. Parent – Head Coach
4. Parent – Athletic Director & Coach
5. Parent – Principal & Athletic Director
6. Only when the DUHS Administration cannot resolve a problem, then the student-athlete's parent(s) should request the Superintendent be involved in the resolution process.

**J. 24-Hour Rule:** The 24-hour rule is an Athletic policy that asks parents and student-athletes to not discuss concerns with the coaching staff for a minimum of 24 hours after the case. It is inappropriate to discuss concerns immediately before or directly after an athletic contest. The correct procedure to contact a coach is to leave a message in the Athletic Office for the coach or send an email. Please do not contact the coach at home, by cell phone, or by other means of social networking.

**K. Tobacco products, controlled substances (drugs), alcoholic beverages, mind altering substances, look-alike drugs, counterfeit drugs, theft, vandalism and destruction of school property.**

The following rules are to be adhered to by all Chieftain student-athletes. Any infraction of the following rules, or serious unethical conduct on the part of the athlete, will result in

suspension or termination of athletic privileges for that particular athlete at Dowagiac Union High School.

1. No smoking, chewing or use or possession of tobacco.
2. No use or possession of controlled substances (drugs), alcoholic beverages, mind altering substances, "look-alike" drugs (including tobacco, vaping, alcohol), counterfeit drugs or any drug substance not prescribed to the student by a physician.

Any student who gives evidence of having been drinking an alcoholic beverage or using any illegal substance or substance mentioned above or is in possession of either of these or any paraphernalia (including vapes or e-cigarettes) at any time shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action.

In addition:

- a. No student may provide, give or deliver, by sale or otherwise, any substance which he/she represents or believes to be a narcotic drug, steroid, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, stimulant, depressant, or intoxicant of any kind;
  - b. No student may possess or use any substance which the student has reason to believe is, or which has been represented to him/her as a narcotic drug, steroid, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, stimulant, depressant or intoxicant of any kind;
  - c. Students are prohibited from possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of caffeine-based pills, substances containing phenylpropanolamine(PPA), stimulants or depressants of any kind, be they available with or without a prescription;
  - d. While this list is not inclusive, all substances as listed on the NCAA banned substance list are also prohibited.
3. No theft of goods, equipment, or property belonging to the school or others on school property, at a school event or while representing the school
  4. No vandalism or destruction of property while on school property, at a school event or while representing the school

**L. PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION:** Athletes are required to check in all authorized medication and/or medical prescriptions with the school office or coach. By doing this, school officials are aware of potential health problems of the student and recognize that authorized medication is in the building

## **Section V: Code Enforcement**

The penalties listed below are minimum penalties. If it is determined that an athlete lied or deliberately withheld information about an alleged infraction, the penalty may be increased. If, in

the judgement of the Athletic Director and the coach, there are extenuating circumstances that warrant a penalty less than or more severe than that stated, such penalty may be invoked for any offense if approved by the high school principal.

**A. Tobacco products, controlled substances (drugs), alcoholic beverages, mind altering substances, look-alike drugs, counterfeit drugs, theft, vandalism and destruction of school property.**

Penalty for first offense

**Off-Season Infraction:**

Suspended from scheduled athletic events for 1/3 (or the equivalent thereof) of the scheduled contest dates for the regular season of athlete's next participating season. If the athlete chooses not to participate in athletics for one(1) calendar year from the infraction, the penalty will be waived.

**In-season Infraction:** Once the athlete has begun a sport's season (defined as the first official practice), he/she will be suspended for 1/3 (or the equivalent thereof) of the scheduled dates of competition for the regular season or until the end of the season, whichever comes first. (The season ends with the last contest or Awards program for that sport -- whichever is later). A suspended athlete may continue to practice if the coach wishes him/her to do so, but may not participate in any competition, scrimmage, event or activities related to that sport during the suspension. Whether he/she is entitled to a letter at the season's end will be determined by the coach and athletic director.

Penalty for second offense

Ineligibility for 20 weeks of MHSAA regulated competition from the effective date of the infraction. During the suspension the athlete may, with the coach's permission, practice until the suspension has been lifted. Suspended athlete may not participate in any competition, scrimmage, event or activities related to that sport during the suspension.

Penalty for third offense

Termination of athletic privileges at Dowagiac Union High School until the conclusion of the student's high school career.

**B. Misdemeanor/Felony:** Any athlete convicted of a felony shall be excluded from any athletic participation for one(1) full year (12 calendar months) from the date of conviction. Conviction of a misdemeanor shall be subject to penalty by the Athletic Director and/or Principal. *Note: Juveniles under the jurisdiction of the Probate Court convicted of delinquent acts which otherwise would have been judged as a misdemeanor or felony (had the student been 17 years old or older at the time of the offense) will have the same penalties imposed for athletes (17 years and/or older) convicted of felonies and/or misdemeanors.*

**C. Penalties and Appeals:** A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary. It is our intent to preserve rules that reasonably pertain to the health and safety of the individual and to



the orderly conduct of the sports program. The welfare of the student and appropriate administration of a complex program of interscholastic athletics is of primary importance. Their welfare transcends other considerations.

**Penalty Enforcement:**

The head coach has the authority to suspend a student from the squad for a portion of/or balance of the season in which the violation has occurred. Violations of the Code as reported by school personnel and the police will be handled under the rules of the Code. Violations reported by non-school personnel will be investigated by the Principal/designee and the Athletic Director. Violations reported by non-school personnel must be made in writing.

**Appeal Procedure:**

Appeals may be made (in writing) when a parent of a student or athlete disputes the offense with which he/she is being charged or the penalty that is imposed for said code violations. Appeals may be filed using the following procedure:

1. The student/parent must request an appeal hearing in writing within seven(7) days following the initial code violation.
2. Within 5 school days of receipt of the appeal request, a hearing will be held before the Athletic Appeals Panel. This panel will consist of: Principal/designee, two varsity level coaches (not directly with the athlete), the superintendent/designee and the Athletic Director.
3. The athlete and/or representative will have the opportunity to present his/her case before the panel. The Athletic Director/designee will then present the facts of the Code Violation to the panel and the penalty given per Athletic Code Enforcement.
4. A decision, in writing, will be rendered within two(2) school days. The decision of the panel will be final.
5. During the period of the appeal, a student-athlete may continue to participate in all practices and contests.

## **NOTICE:**

Representing Dowagiac Union Schools both on and off the field of competition is a privilege and not a right. Students involved in athletics are expected to represent the highest ideals of character by exemplifying good conduct and good citizenship. When administration learns of an infraction involving a student-athlete that occurred during non-school times (such as evening, summer, holiday break or weekends) that is a violation of the Athletic Code of Conduct, Dowagiac Union High School Student Handbook and/or the law, an independent school investigation shall occur. It will be determined, based on the severity of the violation, what penalty shall be imposed for said violation. This Athletic Code of Conduct is in effect in all aspects of the student-athlete life. It will apply both on and off campus, at school/athletic events at home or away. It will be in effect during the school year as well as non-school times.

## **POTENTIAL DANGERS IN ATHLETIC COMPETITION:**

When participating in any type of athletic activity, there is always a possibility that an injury can occur. Statistically, an athlete will suffer at least one injury during their athletic career that requires that he/she miss a number of practices and/or games. Fortunately, most of the injuries that occur with athletics are mild strains, sprains and contusions and the athlete misses little or no participation. It is important to remember that statistically, athletes are much safer than those who participate in riskier types of physical activity. Athletic participation benefits people by teaching self-esteem, team unity, proper health and fellowship. Most people agree that the benefits of participating in athletics outweigh the risks. The Athletic Department of Dowagiac Union High School wants its athletes and parents/guardians to understand that there are risks involved with participating in athletics. The coaching staff will continue to teach and practice only those techniques that promote safe participation, but the staff realizes that some athletic injuries will continue to occur. The staff hopes that the athletes and parents/guardians alike will take the time to learn more about athletic injuries and how to best avoid them. It will take a "team" effort from coaches, athletic trainers, athletes and their parents/guardians to continue to provide safe participation for all of those involved.