

Zeeland Public Schools

Athletic Code of Conduct – Policy 2431.03



ATHLETIC CODE

The purpose of the athletic code is to establish uniform standards for all student-athletes while promoting experiences that aid in the development of students' physical, mental, and emotional well being. The athletic code applies year-round, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the duration of the student-athlete's secondary athletic career, grades 6-12. Application of the code begins with their first season of participation. Participation in extracurricular competitive athletics is a student's privilege, not a right, and can be revoked at any time for failure to meet the standards and requirements of Zeeland Public Schools and the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

GENERAL RULES OF ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY

The following are general rules for eligibility that apply to all student-athletes:

1. Student-athletes must have current physical exams dated on/or after April 15 of the previous school year.
2. Student-athletes cannot be 19 before the September 1st of their senior year.
3. Student-athletes must be passing four of six classes. More information below on academic eligibility.

ACADEMICS

Student-athletes must be passing four out of six classes to participate, or 67%. If an athlete is deemed ineligible, he or she will not be able to compete until his/her grades improve. Once a student-athlete is determined to be ineligible, he/she must sit out a minimum of one week before he/she can return to competition. Student-athletes can practice during this time, although some coaches may set aside part of the practice time to catch up on school work. After one week of ineligibility, the student-athlete can check to see if his/her grades have improved enough that he/she can return to competition.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

- **COACHES REGULATIONS** – Individual coaches may institute other regulations for their particular sport not contained in the handbook. These regulations are to be written and distributed to all student-athletes at the beginning of each season.
- **ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS:**
 1. A student-athlete must be present in school for a half school day in order to participate in games or practice. Exceptions may be granted by the athletic director.
 2. A student-athlete who is on suspension from regular school attendance may not practice or take part in inter-scholastic competition during said suspension.
 3. A student-athlete who is marked unexcused in a class is ineligible to participate in practice or an athletic event that day.

ATHLETIC CONDUCT

The athletic code applies year-round, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the duration of the student-athlete's secondary athletic career, grades 6-12. Application of the code begins with their first season of participation. The athletic director may suspend a student-athlete at any time when a student-athlete's conduct may have a detrimental effect upon the image of the Zeeland Public Schools.

1. Conduct of all student-athletes, both in and out of school, shall be above reproach, and shall not bring discredit to the student-athlete, the team, school, parents or community.
2. Student athletes may not threaten the safety of or attack people or property (school or personal), physically or verbally. This includes, but is not limited to, theft or destruction of school or personal property and electronic bullying or harassment.

3. Student athletes may not have in their possession and/or use any form of tobacco, electronic or vaping device, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, including steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs or other non-prescribed drugs or look-alikes. Photos, videos or other evidence demonstrating student-athletes in possession of, using, or simulating use of the substances listed above will be subject to code violations regardless of age, location, or legality.

In addition, to the specific Athletic Conduct rules above, all general rules that are outlined in the student handbook will also be enforced.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Discipline for infractions of the athletic code shall be handled by the Athletic Director and other school administration. The student-athlete has the right of appeal. Appeals shall be handled by a review board made up of the Assistant High School Principal, Principal, and a current non-coach faculty member. Action of this board may be appealed to the Superintendent and then to the Board of Education. Appeals will be heard promptly. The student-athlete on suspension may not participate in games or contests during the appeal process.

Discipline issues can be divided into one of three categories below:

- **PERSONAL INTEGRITY OFFENSES** – This would include any violation of team rules. Examples would include misbehavior in class, on the bus or in the locker room. Other offenses would include unbecoming conduct, horse-play, or disrespect to coaches, teammates, opponents or officials. Discipline for Personal Integrity Offenses will be determined by the coach, in consultation with the Athletic Director as needed, and should always be communicated to the Athletic Office. Multiple Personal Integrity Offenses could become a Code Violation. Personal Integrity Offenses do not follow a student-athlete from middle school to high school.
- **CODE VIOLATIONS** – Code Violations are typically for illegal activities, including but not limited to the use of alcohol and other drugs, including steroids, tobacco products, any kind of vaping, and other run-ins with law enforcement officials, excluding minor traffic infractions. These violations will result in suspension from the team using a discipline sequence, based on the number of offenses, found below.

There are other Code Violations besides those relating to illegal activity. These would include any suspension out of school, repeated Personal Integrity Offenses, or egregious unbecoming conduct (as determined by the Athletic Director). These actions are also considered Code Violations and will subject the student-athlete to the same discipline sequence found below.

Code violations for illegal activities will follow an athlete from middle school to high school. Those for lesser offenses will not. In other words, an athlete who is caught using alcohol in middle school will move on to high school with one “strike” on the discipline sequence. An athlete who received consequences in middle school for a suspension from school (not related to illegal activities) would have his or her record cleared for high school.

- **GROSS MISCONDUCT** – In certain, rare circumstances, the consequence for egregious behaviors need to jump beyond the traditional discipline sequence found below. With Gross Misconduct, the Athletic Director will work with other building administrators to determine an appropriate consequence. In cases of Gross Misconduct, the traditional sequence of consequences may not apply. The Athletic Director and other building administrators could impose a one year ban for a first offense, for example, should circumstances warrant. Examples of Gross Misconduct would include, but are not limited to: arson, assault, criminal sexual conduct, dealing drugs, hazing, weapons, and felonies or other significant legal issues.
- **DISCIPLINE SEQUENCE** –
 1. First Offense shall be a suspension from 25% of the scheduled regular season games in the student-athlete’s current and/or next sport. Presentation of any awards will be at the discretion of the coach and athletic director. The student-athlete shall be suspended from the prescribed

number of games immediately and successively after the rules infraction has occurred. The student-athlete will practice with the team throughout the suspension and complete the season in good standing to have served the athletic suspension unless otherwise decided by the athletic director and coach.

2. Second offense shall be suspension in the current and/or next sport for 50% of the scheduled regular season games. The student-athlete shall be suspended from the prescribed number of games immediately and successively after the rules infraction has occurred. The student-athlete will practice with the team throughout the suspension and complete the season in good standing to have served the athletic suspension unless otherwise decided by the athletic director and coach. If the offense is the student's second offense involving drugs, alcohol or tobacco products, the student-athlete will be required to complete a school approved assessment and treatment/education program before the suspension ends.
 3. Third offense shall be a suspension for one (1) calendar year from the date of offense. During this time they may not practice or participate with any Zeeland athletic teams. If the offense is the student's third offense involving drugs, alcohol or tobacco products, the student-athlete will be required to complete an assessment program, and treatment/education program before the suspension ends.
 4. Fourth Offense shall be suspension from athletics for the duration of his/her high school career.
- **RESTORATIVE OPTIONS –**
 1. School Approved Education OR Assessment Program: For a first offense involving drugs, alcohol, vaping, or tobacco products, the student-athlete may complete a school approved assessment and treatment/education program reducing their first offense discipline from 25% down to 15%.
 2. Community Service: For a first offense NOT involving drugs, alcohol, vaping, or tobacco products, the student-athlete may complete 3 hours of Athletic Director approved community service reducing their first offense discipline from 25% down to 15%.

A restorative option needs to be **completed** prior to any reduction in discipline sequence.