

**Cambridge Public Schools  
Administrative Guidelines and Procedures**

**ATHLETICS AND COACHING**

While cognizant of the benefits afforded by participation in student athletics, the Cambridge Public Schools (“CPS”) considers its student athletes to be students first and foremost. Participation in athletic events does not and shall not take priority over academic performance.

**Student Eligibility**

For students to be declared eligible to participate in a school sport or club through the athletic office, there is a standard of criteria which must be met or completed which includes academic eligibility, medical clearance, concussion education training, opioid substance abuse awareness resource guide acknowledgment, parental permission through online registration system, and ImPACT Baseline Testing protocol.

**Academic Eligibility**

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (“MIAA”) has set forth academic eligibility standards designed to ensure that a student is fully enrolled in school and actively engaged in their academic life on a consistent basis throughout the school year. While the MIAA’s standards are used as a starting point for eligibility, individual school districts are permitted to develop their own standards for participation. CPS has adopted the following requirements for student athletic participation at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School:

- Student athletes must have a marking period grade point average of at least seventy (70) from their most recent report card
- Student athletes must pass at least three (3) of their four (4) classes in the preceding grading period and earn the appropriate credits or be on track to earn those credits.

Student athletes who are identified by the Athletic Director and Coach to require academic monitoring must complete progress reports on a weekly basis and submit them to the athletic office every Friday afternoon until the Athletic Director and Coach notify the student that the progress reports no longer need to be submitted. If a student athlete does not turn in a progress report, they will not be permitted to play in the next athletic contest. Coaches will *carefully* check progress reports and communicate with the principal and Dean(s) of Students via e-mail about any unsatisfactory progress of and/or behavioral concerns about team members. Coaches will also e-mail staff members as needed to assist in student achievement.

Coaches are responsible for monitoring the academic progress of student athletes throughout the entire school year. A computer system provides coaches with access to relevant academic information and sorts progress reports and report cards by athletic teams.

If a student is absent from school on a given school day, they are not allowed to participate in any school athletic practice or school athletic contest on that day.

### **Parental Permission**

CPS utilizes an online registration program, which must be completed by a parent/guardian/caregiver. This online registration system allows permission for a student athlete to participate in any athletic program, team or club offered by the athletic department. The registration process also includes pertinent information regarding medical history, emergency contact information, and acknowledgment of athletic department procedures and policies.

### **Medical Clearance**

Each student is responsible to submit a copy of their most recent medical physical. Policy set forth by the MIAA requires that all medical physicals are valid for a time period of 13 months, at which the updated copy of the physical exam must be submitted.

### **Concussion Management**

All schools subject to MIAA rules are required by state law to ensure that student athletes, their parents/guardians/caregivers, coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, and physicians learn about the consequences of concussions and other head injuries through training programs and written materials. The law requires that student athletes and/or their parents/guardians/caregivers inform their coaches or athletic trainers about any prior head injuries at the beginning of the athletic season. If a student athlete sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, during a contest or practice, the law now mandates that the student be taken out of play or practice and requires written certification from a licensed medical professional in order to return.

Before any CPS student may participate in any CPS athletic program, they must provide a signed and dated parental/guardian/caregiver consent form, through the registration process verifying that both the student and their parents/guardians/caregivers have successfully completed an online Sports Related Head Injury and Concussion Awareness Course. Free online courses that meet statutory standards are available at the [NFHS Learning Center](#) and [Center for Disease Control Heads Up](#).

### **ImPACT Testing**

In addition, all CPS students participating in athletic programs are required to take Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (“ImPACT”), a pre-season neurocognitive screening test. The test is intended to provide an indication of memory, concentration, and reaction time. The initial test generates a baseline ImPACT score, recorded when the student athlete’s brain is healthy and uninjured.

In the event that a student athlete sustains a head injury, a post-trauma test will be administered and the results compared to the baseline ImPACT score. A student athlete will not be permitted to participate in any contest or practice until the pre-trauma and post-trauma scores are equivalent, the student remains symptom-free, and other guidelines for safe return to participation are met. Even when a student has equivalent pre-trauma and post-trauma ImPACT scores, the school may limit the student's participation in athletics in a manner it deems appropriate. However, a student athlete may return to full participation if cleared by a licensed medical doctor.

### **Opioid Substance Abuse Awareness**

Health and safety of our students at CRLS and in the City of Cambridge is a top priority. The Cambridge Public Schools has a policy on substance abuse prevention and education. A copy of that policy can be found [here](#).

At this point in time, use of drugs and alcohol as well other substances is an epidemic which needs our attention as educators, coaches, parents/guardians/caregivers, and peers. It is of great importance to work together in sharing information and knowledge of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, opioids and other substances. The Massachusetts Public Health Resource page for parents/guardians/caregivers, which can be found [here](#), has information and links to information to help us communicate, address and deal with this epidemic. Information pertaining specifically to prescription and over the counter drugs from the National Institute on Drugs can be found [here](#). Additionally, concerns parents may have regarding drug, alcohol, opioid or substance abuse can be communicated to a school official to help in identifying resources and personnel who can assist in the ensuring the safety and health of a student.

### **NCAA Standards**

If a student wishes to participate in collegiate athletics during their freshman year at an NCAA Division I or Division II college, they must satisfy the requirements outlined by the NCAA Eligibility Center.

1. Students must graduate from high school.
2. Students must successfully complete a core curriculum of at least sixteen academic courses.
3. Students must attain a grade point average (based on a maximum of 4.0).
4. Specific core course requirements for Division I and Division II and grade point average scale can be reviewed at the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#).

## Role and Responsibilities of Coaches

A “coach” shall be defined as any temporary, probationary, permanent, or contracted employee of CPS who provides supervisory and/or instructional services in interscholastic athletic programs and activities. The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success.

The welfare of student athletes should be of the utmost concern at all times. Accordingly, CPS shall implement the following standards of ethical conduct for all coaches. A coach shall:

- establish player safety and welfare as the highest priority;
- provide proper supervision of student athletes while under their direction;
- properly instruct players in the safe use and care of equipment and uniforms;
- be aware that they have a tremendous influence on the education of the student athlete;
- take an active role in the prevention of the abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs among student athletes;
- establish and model fair play, sportsmanship, and proper conduct during contests, during practices, and in the community;
- consistently require players to adhere to the established rules and standards of the game;
- communicate any injuries that a student athlete sustains directly to the parent/guardian/caregiver in person or by phone immediately after the practice or competition in which a student has been removed from play for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs or symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness and by the end of the next business day, provide such information to the parent, in writing or electronic format and communicate with the Athletic Director and school nurse that the student has been removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness;
- show respect for players, parents/guardians/caregivers, other coaches, and staff;
- respect and support the integrity and judgment of the game officials by refraining from public criticism or other conduct that would incite players or spectators against officials;
- use discretion and proper, non-profane language when providing constructive criticism and when reprimanding players;
- understand the proper administrative chain of command so as to refer all requests and grievances through proper channels; and
- adhere to the responsibilities for coaches set forth in 105 C.M.R. 201.013 regarding head injuries and concussions in extracurricular athletic activities

A coach shall **not**:

- recruit student athletes from other schools;
- scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or the MIAA;
- exert pressure on faculty members to give student athletes special consideration;
- exert undue influence on a student athlete’s decision to enroll in a particular athletic program at a public or private post-secondary educational institution;
- place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character;

- seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules of the contest;
- use alcohol or tobacco products when in contact with players; or
- suggest, encourage, or provide a means for any athlete to use non-prescription drugs, anabolic steroids, or any other substance to increase physical development or performance that is not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, the Surgeon General, or the American Medical Association.

If a coach acts contrary to the above standards or otherwise inappropriately, they will be subject to appropriate action by the Superintendent, Athletic Director and/or designee. Potential consequences include verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension, and dismissal. In addition, all CPS coaches must agree to abide by the MIAA Code of Ethics during all contests and practices.

As the welfare of student athletes is of the utmost importance, all injuries to student athletes should be taken seriously. If there is any question as to the extent of an injury, a physician must be consulted and a written release obtained before the student athlete may resume participation in practices and/or contests.

### **Teachers as Coaches**

Any coach who is also a CPS teacher is required to meet all responsibilities as a teacher. That is, the coach/teacher must attend all regular after-school sessions and meet all contractual responsibilities as a teacher, including but not limited to: school meetings, departmental meetings, and after-school conferences.

### **Controlled Substances**

Rule 62 of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, which addresses Student (and Coach) Eligibility: Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco, provides, in pertinent part, that:

From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, vape pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; drug paraphernalia; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer,” inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter I medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one’s mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by their doctor.

This MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render “guilt by association”, e.g. many student-athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate this standard. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements. If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again.

MIAA Rule 62 further provides that the first violation of this rule by a student athlete is a suspension from twenty-five (25%) of the regular season and tournament, and the second and subsequent violations are a suspension from sixty (60%) of the regular season and tournament with an expectation that the student of their own volition become a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program. MIAA Rule 62 also provides that the penalties shall be cumulative each academic year, but serving the penalty could carry over for one year, or if the penalty is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.

During either the practice season or season of play, student athletes are prohibited from possessing, using, buying, selling, or distributing any controlled substance, regardless of the quantity. Coaches should stress that this prohibition on controlled substances applies both during and outside of school hours and should explain the consequences of violation. Additionally, consistent with the provisions of MIAA Rule 62, coaches and other athletic staff shall not use any tobacco product during any practice or competition.

Additionally, coaches should stress that the health and safety of students is a top priority and that the school district has a policy on substance abuse prevention and education, this should include, in accordance with the provision of MIAA Rule 62 that the unauthorized use of anabolic androgenic steroids and performance enhancing drugs are not acceptable. If a student athlete and/or their parents/guardians/caregivers raise any concerns regarding drug, alcohol, opioid or substance abuse, these concerns should be directed to the attention of the Athletic Director or designee who can help in identifying resources and personnel who can assist in ensuring the safety and health of the student.

Consult the CPS Administrative Guidelines and Procedures: Alcohol and Other Drugs for more information.

## **Hazing**

CPS will not tolerate hazing of any kind and will take action against those who participate in the hazing of any individual. If any employee or student is determined to have participated in such hazing, CPS will take disciplinary action against them, up to and including termination for an employee or expulsion for a student.

Hazing is defined and prohibited by law in Sections 17 through 19 of Chapter 269 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Massachusetts law also requires that a copy of those sections be issued to every secondary school group, team, or association, including athletic teams. The text of Chapter 269, Sections 17-19 follows:

**§ 17. Definition; Penalty.**

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

**§ 18. Reporting Hazing Offense; Penalty for Failure to Report Violation.**

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to themselves or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

**§ 19. Notice to Schools and Colleges; Annual Reports; Adoption of Disciplinary Policy.**

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with this section’s requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution’s recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said

sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

***Policy references:*** JICFA-E, JJIB

***Legal references:*** Mass. Gen. Laws, ch. 269, §§ 17-19

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