

Stonington Public Schools Athletic Handbook

Philosophy:

Stonington Public Schools believes that athletic participation and competition provide a vital link between the classroom and the world at large. Research data strongly supports the relationship between learning and fitness. Active, fit, engaged students learn better. It is the vision of the district that Stonington students will be provided the opportunity through quality intramural and interscholastic athletic programs to realize their fullest potential.

The district endorses an athletic program that is multi-modal, incorporating intramurals that include health and fitness activities (i.e. nutrition, hydration counseling, exercise not within the classroom setting) as well as individual and team sports (i.e. racquet sports, cycling, golf, etc.). The intramural program will serve grades five through eight. The district also endorses competitive team sports that foster widespread participation (e.g. cross country), interscholastic sports beginning at grades seven and eight (e.g. boys and girls basketball) and other such sports that meet the criteria for inclusion in the middle school athletic program.

Beginning at the ninth grade, interscholastic sports will be offered. Criteria will be used to determine the district-endorsed sport offerings.

Sportsmanship:

As indicated, the development of sportsmanship is an important objective of the program. This development often takes place while the athlete is under the pressure of competition. For this reason it is important that all participants in the program understand the responsibilities that all must assume in this important area. The responsibilities of sportsmanship include:

The Player

- Treats opponents with respect.
- Plays hard, but plays within the rules.
- Exercises self-control at all times, setting the example for others to follow.
- Respects officials and accepts their decisions without gesture or argument.
- Wins without boasting, loses without excuses, and never quits.
- Always remembers that it is a privilege to represent the school and community.

The Coach

- Treats own players and opponents with respect.
- Inspires in the athletes a love for the game and the desire to compete fairly.
- Is the type of person he/she wants the athletes to be.
- Disciplines those on the team who display unsportsmanlike behavior.
- As a teacher, understands that the athletic arena is a classroom.
- Respects the judgment and interpretation of the rules by the officials.

The Spectator

- Attempts to understand and be informed of the playing rules.
- Appreciates a good play no matter who makes it.
- Cooperates with and responds enthusiastically to cheerleaders.
- Shows compassion for an injured player; applauds positive performances; does not heckle, jeer or distract players; and avoids use of profane and obnoxious language and behavior.
- Respects the judgment and strategy of the coach and does not criticize players or coaches for loss of a game.
- Respects property of others and authority of those who administer the competition.
- Censures those whose behavior is unbecoming.

Definitions:

Interscholastic Sport: A sport that is recognized by CIAC or adheres to a set of standardized rules and safety guidelines promulgated by a state/national association, competes regionally and/or statewide, and has been approved by the Board of Education. An interscholastic sport is reviewed annually, submits a budget, maintains current status in a recognized league and submits rosters of team members with emergency contact information.

Club Sport: A sport that adheres to a set of standardized rules and safety guidelines promulgated by a state/national association, is involved in organized interscholastic competition at both league and state level, is financially self-sustaining, enables the school to maintain compliance with Title IX guidelines.

Co-op Sport: A sport that adheres to a set of standardized rules and safety guidelines promulgated by a state/national association, is involved in organized interscholastic competition at both league and state level, is financially self-sustaining, enables the school to maintain compliance with Title IX guidelines, is a team composed of athletes sponsored by two or three different schools, and meets requirements of a Cooperative Team as delineated by the CIAC.

Intramurals: Intra-school sports activities where participation is based on interest not athletic ability. There is no interscholastic competition.

Hazing: Any type of harassment including verbal, sexual, racial, or physical. It includes activities or actions, which intimate or threaten another individual, or actions designed to create group affiliations, which can cause physical and/or emotional harm.

Suspension: The exclusion from practice and competition for a limited time due to disciplinary, scholarship, or other eligibility requirements.

Expulsion: The exclusion from the sport for the remainder of the season due to serious disciplinary, scholarship, or other eligibility requirements.

Squad Discipline: Discipline administered to individual students by the coach within the squad framework.

Addition of a Sport:

1. Any new sport must begin as a club sport.
2. Middle school interscholastic sports must exist at both middle schools.
3. Any interested group of people must create a proposal that includes the following:
 - Names, addresses, and phone numbers of the organizers and person responsible for the program (from both schools if middle level) and the names of their proposed coaches, if applicable.
 - Rules and guidelines promulgated by the state/national association governing the sport.
 - Documented student interest in the sport.
 - Current sport participation of the interested students.
 - General impact on other existing sports.
 - Proposed schedule of competitions.
 - Budget and proposal for fundraising.
 - Title IX impact.
 - Facility/field needs.
 - Equipment needs.
 - Transportation needs.
 - Three-year plan for sustainability.
4. Submit proposal to a committee composed of the Athletic Director, Building and Grounds Director, and Principals for endorsement. Then,
5. Submit proposal to the SBIT for endorsement. Then,

6. Submit proposal to the District Athletic Committee for review and possible recommendation to the Board of Education.

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7. Upon approval by the Board of Education club sports status is granted.
8. After successful completion of three seasons, the club sport shall be reviewed by a committee composed of the Athletic Director, Building and Grounds Director, Principal, and Superintendent and either becomes a varsity sport with all rights, funding, responsibilities or is eliminated.

Evaluation/Continuation/Elimination of a Sport:

1. The Athletic Director and the Principal(s) submit a sports status report of all interscholastic sports and clubs to the District Athletic Committee within ninety days of the completion of each season. The status report will include:
 - Win/loss record
 - Awards
 - Number of participants (start and finish)
 - Injuries
 - Actual vs. proposed costs
 - Anecdotal information
 - Documented disciplinary actions
2. The District Athletic Committee recommends endorsement for continuation of the sports' current status, makes recommendations for improvements, or recommends elimination.
3. The recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of Education. A sport to be recommended for elimination will become a separate agenda item for the Board of Education.

Eligibility:

1. Scholarship, age, and residency determines eligibility for athletic participation at both the high school and middle school levels. These requirements can be found in the high school and middle schools' athletic handbooks. The requirements are aligned with the CIAC eligibility guidelines.
2. SPS requires, in addition to the CIAC guidelines, other eligibility rules.
 - School attendance: Students are expected to abide by district attendance policy. Students absent from school on a regular school day cannot attend or participate in any athletic activity on the day of the absence, unless they have been excused from class or classes by school authorities and have received clearance from the office to attend the athletic activity. A student must attend school for a minimum of three hours to participate in practice or competition.
 - Athletic attendance: Athletes are required to be at all practices and contests, on time, during the course of the season. Exceptions coincide with exceptions for absence from school in the District attendance policy. Parents and athletes are informed of attendance requirements for practice, athletic contests, and playoffs or tournaments during the athletic season, including school vacation periods in the middle and high school athletic handbooks.
 - Medical Procedures: All participants in the athletic program must have passed a physical examination within the calendar year before play, complete The Interim History Form prior to participation in subsequent sports during the school year, and adhere to any other medical procedures outlined in the middle and high school handbooks.

3. Discipline: Student athletes are expected to adhere to all SPS policies and regulations including but not limited to suspension/expulsion (#5114), conduct (#5136), suspension/expulsion drugs, tobacco, alcohol (#5131.6), weapons and

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dangerous instruments (#5131.7), off-school grounds misconduct (#5131.8), and hazing-bullying (#5131.911).

- Students being disciplined by the school with suspensions or expulsions are ineligible for practice or competition. Student detentions and suspensions are not excused absences from practice; therefore, they will impact the student's participation in future competitions.
- Squad Discipline: Issued by the coach up to but not including suspension and expulsion; suspension and expulsion disciplinary actions may be
- issued by the coach in conjunction with the Athletic Director and school Principal. Squad suspension shall not exceed 10 consecutive school days; expulsion shall not exceed one season.

Selection & Evaluation of Coaches

All coaches are expected to adhere to all Stonington Public Schools policies and regulations and enforce Stonington Public Schools policies and regulations with players. Head coaching positions shall be selected through a committee process consisting of not less than the following members: principal, athletic director, two parents, coaching staff representative, and a student (team captain, if possible). Assistant coaching positions shall be selected through a committee process consisting of not less than the following members: principal or assistant principal, athletic director, head coach, parent, and a student (team captain, if possible). Coaches shall sign upon receiving a copy of the Stonington Public Schools Athletic Handbook, the school athletic handbook, and applicable Stonington Public Schools policies and regulations. The coaches shall attend an orientation meeting with the Athletic Director and Principal prior to the first practice.

The school principal will complete annual written evaluations of coaches with assistance from the athletic director. Evaluations will include a statement concerning continued employment, and shall be kept on file. If a coach will not be retained for the following season, the coach will be informed within 90 days following the end of the last season.

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Upon recommendation from the school principal and approval of the superintendent, these annual stipend positions (unless for good cause greater than annual is offered) will be offered to the most qualified applicant with appropriate licensure and certification. In the event that two or more applicants possess similar skill and ability, first preference for consideration will be given to Stonington CSDE certified teachers.

Transportation

All athletics must utilize the transportation provided by the school for travel to and from scheduled contests.

- Behavior standards in effect for all students utilizing district transportation will be enforced.
- Athletes may be allowed to return from a contest by private transportation only if the coach is given a signed request from parent or guardian. This request must be made prior to the trip. In addition, a bus waiver form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian. This form will be kept in the Athletic Director's office for one year.
- Cleats of any type are not to be worn on buses or vans.

Equipment:

Athletes are responsible for all individual and team equipment issued to them during the season. The athlete will be financially responsible for any damaged or missing equipment.

- Athletic uniforms are to be worn at school sponsored events only, unless designated otherwise by the coach.
- Athletes in possession of uniforms and/or equipment not officially issued to them will be subject to suspension and possible expulsion from the squad.

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- All issued items must be returned to the athletic department at the end of the season prior to the presentation of any athletic award.
- No athletic equipment will be issued to any student with an outstanding financial obligation for lost or damaged equipment. Athletes who have not returned or paid for lost/damaged equipment will be referred to the Assistant Principal.
- Equipment Safety – Athletes should inspect their equipment on a daily basis. Each coach will instruct squad members on the proper use and care of individual and team equipment.

Facilities/Fields:

1. Priority of use of school facilities and fields
 - School use
 - Town use
 - Private organizations
2. Responsibility and Supervision
 - Custodians must be on duty at any event using school facilities or fields, paid for by the user.
 - Users must fill out a facility use form from the business office of the Board of Education.
 - The name of the person responsible for the specific activity must be included on the form.

- If equipment or facilities are abused, the user can lose his/her access to school facilities and/or equipment.

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STONINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Stonington, Connecticut