

# **Cass City Public Schools**



## **Athletic Handbook**

6/18/2025

## **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

An athletic philosophy is based upon a belief in Excellence in Athletics, Academics, the School, and the Community.

The athletic program is an integral part of the total school educational program, more appropriately called Educational Athletics. The important point is for the Student/Athletes, the Coaches, Administrators, and Community to realize the student/athletes are to be students first and athletes second.

The Educational Athletic Program must NOT be judged on wins and losses. Athletics is a privilege requiring an understanding of obligations and responsibilities to that end. ALL Cass City students, regardless of race, sex, abilities, etc., are invited to become involved in the Cass City Athletic Program and will receive equal opportunity to participate in all programs. At the lower levels, especially in Middle School, every attempt will be made to run a “No Cut” program. Each student/athlete will have the opportunity to improve through proper training—physically, psychologically, and socially.

The Educational Athletic Program helps the student body to develop a meaning of school morale, leadership, good sportsmanship, and improvement of the quality of fair play and courtesy.

The community receives through the Educational Athletic Program, the opportunity to be involved and view the need to have athletics as an integral part of the school. To attain this philosophy, all administrators, coaches, student/athletes, family members, and spectators must be positive role models in their attitudes, conduct, and enthusiasm for the program and their sport, making the athletic experience an enjoyable and rewarding one for all involved. All members of the Athletic Program should always be striving to involve ALL of the students/athletes in every way possible in the Cass City Educational Athletic Program.

## **CASS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT**

Cass City Public Schools aspires to have all students lead healthy, meaningful, and productive lives.

## **CASS CITY ATHLETIC GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES**

The athlete is an ambassador of the school at interscholastic athletic activities. In this important capacity, these standards should be practiced. Gross violation of these standards may result in a suspension from participation in the Cass City Athletic Program by the Cass City Public Schools Administration.

1. Know and adhere to the athletic code/policies of the school.
2. Exceed all attendance and academic requirements as practical evidence of loyalty to school and team and proper philosophy of school-sponsored athletics.
3. Observe completely, all policies regarding conduct, doing so as a duty to the school, team and self.
4. Counsel with the athletic director over questions of eligibility.
5. Practice and play fairly, giving complete effort in all circumstances and credit in victory to teammates and opponents in defeat. Always display good sportsmanship and humility.
6. Accept favorable and unfavorable decisions, as well as victory and defeat, with equal grace.
7. Demonstrate respect for opponents, peers, spectators, coaches, administrators and officials before, during, and after contests.
8. Demonstrate self-control and avoid physical or verbal abuse (any form of “taunting”) of team members, opponents, officials, spectators, peers, administrators, etc.
9. Students transferring into Cass City Public Schools must meet MHSAA transfer rules. Refer to [MHSAA.com](http://MHSAA.com) for more details.

## **ATHLETICS OFFERED AT CASS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

<b>FALL</b>	<b>WINTER</b>	<b>SPRING</b>
Football (JH,JV,V)	Boys Basketball (JH,F,JV,V)	Baseball (JV,V)
Volleyball (F,JV,V)	Girls Basketball (JH, JV, V)	Softball (JV,V)
Cross Country(JH,V)	Wrestling (JH,V)	Track and Field (JH,V)
Boys Soccer* (V)	Gymnastics (V)	Boys Golf (V)
Girls Swim and Dive* (V)	Boys Swim and Dive* (V)	Girls Soccer* (V)
Girls Golf (V)	Bowling (V)	Girls Tennis* (V)
Boys Tennis* (V)	Boys Ice Hockey*(V)	
	Girls Ice Hockey* (V)	

\* Denotes Co-op

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

If the student/athlete or the parent perceives a “problem” with the coach or on the team they are involved in, the proper “chain of command” to rectify the “problem” is as follows: (student athlete must be present during all conversations).

1. The Coach
2. The Athletic Director
3. The Superintendent

Please follow this “chain of command” to alleviate any “problems” the athlete or parent may be seeing or experiencing.

Do not attempt to confront a coach before or after practice or at an event. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. A 24-hour No Contact Period is enforced. Coaches and parents need this time to cool down, meetings of this nature do not promote resolutions. Athletic Staff are not obligated to respond during that 24-hour period.

### **RULES OF ELIGIBILITY**

A. **ENROLLMENT:** A student must be enrolled for a minimum of 5 out of 7 hours of the school day in the JR High School or Sr. High School no later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day.

#### **B. AGE:**

1. **HIGH SCHOOL:** A student must be under the age of 19 years, unless the 19<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, in which case the student is eligible for the remainder of the school year. If age 19 is achieved before September 1<sup>st</sup>, the student is ineligible to participate on high school teams.

2. **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL:** A student in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade must be under the age of 14 years unless the 14<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. If age 14 is achieved before September 1<sup>st</sup>, the student is ineligible to participate on any 7th-grade teams. A student in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade must be under the age of 15 years unless the 15<sup>th</sup> birthday occurs on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. If age 15 is achieved before September 1st the student is ineligible to participate on any 8th-grade teams. An 8th-grade student who will be 15 before September 1<sup>st</sup> may apply for “advanced eligibility” through the Michigan High School Athletic Association

(MHSAA). If the “advanced eligibility” is granted, that student may then participate on the high school teams.

**C. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS:** A student must have passed a physical examination by a physician and have a completed, signed physical card on file in the school district.

**D. PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM:** A student must have a signed consent form on file. All consent forms, medical information, emergency information, etc can be located on the school website under the athletics tab.

**E. SEMESTERS OF COMPETITION:**

1. **High School:** A student enrolled in grades 9-12 may compete in no more than four first and four second semester seasons of competition.

2. **Junior High School:** A student enrolled in 7-8 may compete in no more than two first and two second semester seasons of competition.

**F. SEMESTERS OF ENROLLMENT:**

1. **High School:** A student may not be enrolled in more than eight semesters in grades 9-12 to be eligible to participate in any athletics.

2. **Junior High School:** A student may not be enrolled in more than four semesters in grades 7-8 to be eligible to participate in any athletics.

**G. TRANSFER STUDENTS:** Please consult with the Athletic Director to determine athletic eligibility status when transferring per MHSAA rules for high school students.

**H. AMATEUR STATUS:** A student may not accept money, gifts, or other valuables from any source for participating in athletics. Students may not have officiated for pay in interscholastic contests or signed any professional contracts.

**I. AWARDS:** Student athletes may not accept any awards for participation that exceed a value of 40.00.

**J. LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP:** A student, who is a member of a Junior High School or High School athletic Team, may not compete in any “non-school” sponsored event or tournament in the same sport during that season. This includes 3-on-3 basketball and other events.

**K. 6TH GRADE PARTICIPATION:** 6th-grade students are allowed to participate with 7<sup>th</sup> and/or 8<sup>th</sup> graders in individual sports (cross country, track, wrestling) per MHSAA. 6th-grade students will be allowed to participate in JH team sports only if the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8th-grade teams are below the following minimum numbers of student-athletes:

7/8<sup>th</sup> Football (15)

7<sup>th</sup> Girls and Boys Basketball (10)

7<sup>th</sup> Volleyball (10)

8<sup>th</sup> Girls and Boys Basketball (10)

8<sup>th</sup> Volleyball (10)

In Volleyball and Basketball (7/8) students may be shifted from one team to the other to meet minimum participation numbers. Participation of 6th-grade students on Junior High School “Team” sports must be approved by the Athletic Director prior to participation.

**L. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY:** Minimum guidelines established for Athletic Academic Eligibility for students within the Cass City School District.

Students wanting to participate on one or more of the various athletic teams/extracurricular activities the Cass City School District has to offer must meet the following academic requirements.

1. Athletic Eligibility will run each week starting the second week of each marking period. Students failing any class after week two will be ineligible to participate in athletics.
2. Those students failing any class will be given a “warning” week (one and only one warning week will be given, not one warning week per class) to get their grades up to passing. During the warning period, the student will be allowed to participate in all team activities.
3. A student declared academically ineligible, will be required to sit the following week (Monday-Sunday). The student athlete must participate in practice and attend games with the team. The student athlete WILL NOT be permitted to dress for games.
4. No student shall compete in any interscholastic scrimmage or contest who does not have his or her credit in the official records (Transcript), at least 66 percent of full credit load potential for a full-time student for the last semester during which he or she shall have been enrolled in grades 9 to 12, inclusive. The minimum met would be passing 5 of 7 classes. A student entering the 9th grade for the first time, except those who participated under MHSAA Regulation I, Section 1(D) or who had eligibility advanced under MHSAA Regulation III,

Section 2 (C), may compete without reference to his/her record in the 8th grade. The penalty for non-compliance is 60 scheduled school days or until the failed credit is made up as aligned by the MHSAA. Students can recover these credits through intersession, summer school, etc.

M. **ATTENDANCE:** Attendance in school is crucial. A student **MUST** be in attendance for a full day on the day of a game or contest if the student plans to play in the game or contest (unless excused by athletic administration). Exceptions to this policy are: Doctor or Dentist appointments, Funerals, Court Appearances, school related activities (such as field trips or college visitations) with proper documentation. Students will be allotted one emergency absence outside of the above mentioned documented absences that is approved by the athletic administration. If a contest falls on a weekend, the student must attend school on the last scheduled day.

N. **MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION:** Cass City student-athletes may have a desire to participate in more than one sport in a single season. Prior to the season starting, if both coaches are aware and in agreement that this is not only possible, but also beneficial for the student then a Dual Sport Authorization and Agreement Form must be completed. It is encouraged to declare this intent months in advance so the most advantageous schedule can be established for both sports. It is important that a primary and secondary sport be declared. The primary sport will take precedence in all activities associated with that sport over the secondary sport. Conference vs Non-Conference competitions are not applicable. A league secondary sport competition does not take priority over a non-conference primary sport competition. It is understood that practices of the primary sport will/can be missed for Secondary Sport Competitions.

O. **CLUB & TRAVEL SPORTS:** In rare circumstances, Cass City student-athletes have the opportunity to participate in Club/Travel Sports during a school sponsored athletic season. The Cass City sport will take precedence in all activities associated with that sport over the Club//Travel sport. Missed Cass City practices/games due to the Club/Travel Sport will be handled in accordance with the individual Cass City Coach and Athletic Director. Exceptions can be made, with advance notice & agreement from both the Cass City coach, parents, and player.

\*Note-Participation in any extracurricular activity is a “privilege” and not a right and the infractions listed and penalties itemized are not all-inclusive. Further, the district has the authority to interpret and apply the policy as deemed necessary.

## **ATHLETIC POLICY**

All incidents listed below must be reported and/or substantiated by a member of the Cass City teaching, coaching or administrative staff, or any law enforcement agency.

An athlete shall conduct himself/herself in such a manner as to bring credit to his/her team, school, and himself/herself. All incidents listed below must be reported and/or substantiated by a member of the Cass City teaching, coaching or administrative staff, or any law enforcement

agency. Some examples of conduct considered violations are: Cheating, Stealing, Immoral Conduct, Attaining 6 points in the High School Discipline system, being suspended from school. An athlete is expected to refrain from the use of any substance (stimulant or depressant) which is harmful to his/her physical, emotional, or mental well being, such as: alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and any other item which in the judgment of the Athletic Council is in this category. An athlete is expected to follow procedures concerning practice and competition laid down by the coach. This policy is in effect 365 days per year. A student should realize that extra-curricular activities apply at all times throughout the student's high school career, including off-season and all vacation periods 12 months a year. The rules are not limited to student behavior at school-sponsored activities or on school property. Participation is established when a student participates in the first practice session in any athletic activity.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS**

There is an Athletic Council to enforce these policies and determine the validity of the accusation or complaint. The athlete shall appear before the Athletic Council to hear and answer the accusation. The athlete may be accompanied by his/her parents at this meeting. If the accusation is found to be true, the athlete will be dealt with at the discretion of the council.

Athletic Council Members- Superintendent, High School Principal, Athletic Director, All Varsity Head Coaches.

**\*COACHES DISCRETION:** Our Athletic Department is committed to fostering an environment that encourages sportsmanship, commitment, and respect both on and off the field. Consequently, we have established the following guidelines to ensure fairness, clarity, and consistency when it comes to disciplining student-athletes.

Coaches have the discretion of increasing the above consequences and the authority to establish additional rules and consequences for their individual sport with the approval of the administration. If or when coaches increase consequences the required consequences from the Cass City Athletic Code will be credited accordingly.

Each coach has the responsibility to maintain discipline and manage their team effectively. It is within their discretion to impose reasonable disciplinary measures, taking into account the severity of the misconduct, the student-athlete's prior behavior, the impact on the team, and the wider school community.

**Verbal with Written Warnings:** For minor infractions, coaches may issue verbal and written warnings to student-athletes. These warnings serve to communicate the nature of the infraction and to provide the student-athlete an opportunity to correct their behavior. Repeat offenses after warnings may lead to more severe disciplinary measures.



**Expulsion from team:** In extreme cases ,where the student-athlete’s behavior is significantly detrimental to the team, school, or self, a coach may recommend expulsion from the team. Such a recommendation must be approved by the Athletic Director, who will review the case and make the final decision.

Individual team regulations, such as practice guidelines, are to be determined by the coach.

**\*SUSPENSIONS:** Any student receiving home suspensions will not be allowed to attend or participate in practices, competitions, or any school-related activities for the duration of the suspension. For in-school suspensions only, students may attend and participate in practices but may not participate in competitions. This is to ensure that the team is not at a disadvantage when said student is reinstated, and also allows for physical conditioning to continue (as court cases have deemed necessary). Suspensions go to midnight on the final day of that suspension. Athletic suspensions not fulfilled will carry over to the next season of participation and be counted only if the season is completed.

## **EQUIPMENT, TRANSPORTATION, AND FACILITIES**

A. Equipment is issued for the use of team members ONLY. It remains the property of the school district and is to be maintained and cared for. Equipment that is damaged beyond normal wear and tear or is lost or stolen will be charged to the student at its replacement cost. Uniforms are to be cleaned or washed before being turned in. School-issued equipment is to be worn only for practices and contests, or as permitted by the coach.

B. All Athletic teams will use regular or special-purpose school vehicles for transportation to and from all contests. All team members are expected to ride the approved vehicle to and from each contest. A special request must be made to the coach and approved by the Athletic Director or their representative, in writing via a handwritten note, phone call or email before the departure of the bus/van to away contest, to allow an exception. Team members are allowed to ride to and from an away contest with a designated person appointed by the parent/guardian when prior arrangements have been made and approved in writing by the Athletic Director. Coaches have the right to deny a student’s request to travel separately from the teams if it is not deemed appropriate. When traveling to and from contests, all bus rules are to be followed.

C. For co-op sports where Cass City is not the primary school, participating teams are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from practices and games. The primary school may submit a transportation request to the Cass City Transportation Department, which will be granted based on availability.

D. All school facilities (ours and the schools we visit), are to be treated with the utmost respect. Coaches, bus drivers, parents, spectators, and athletes all have a responsibility in caring for and maintaining all facilities. When leaving any facility, our goal should be to leave it in as good of shape as when we arrived, or even better. Always police, (clean up) any facility that has been used.

## **PRACTICES AND GAMES**

A. Practice schedules will be determined based on facility and availability, with varsity teams having first priority. No required practices will be held on Saturdays, holidays or when school has been canceled. There are to be no practices on Sundays unless cleared by the athletic director. No practice session is to be held without proper coach supervision. When school is canceled due to inclement weather, a determination will be made by the Superintendent and the Athletic Director if practices and contests will be permitted. Practices and contests on canceled days due to inclement weather will be voluntary.

B. Attendance at practices is required. The following are some of the more important reasons for being at practice every day:

1. Conditioning
2. Learning the plays
3. Skill Development
4. Teamwork
5. Camaraderie
6. To learn anything new discussed during the week in preparation for the contest. The consequences of missing practice are determined by each coach in conjunction with the Athletic Director.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

All members of the Cass City Athletic Teams and their fans are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will reflect positively on the school and community. Poor sportsmanship and negative behaviors will be disciplined appropriately. Taunting our opponents will not be tolerated by our personnel or our school.

### **Cass City Public Schools-Athletics Parent to Coach Communication Guidelines**

#### **PARENT/COACH RELATIONSHIP:**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to the children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

#### **COMMUNICATION PARENTS CAN EXPECT FROM COACHES:**

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations of your child as well as all players on the squad.
3. Locations and times of practices/contests. Please bear in mind that sometimes posted practice and game times are changed with short notice due to unforeseen circumstances. Efforts will be made to communicate this in the most efficient manner possible.
4. Team requirements (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, camps, weight training).

5. The procedure should your child be injured during practice.
6. Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation. (Team rules)

**COMMUNICATION COACHES EXPECT FROM PARENTS:**

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
2. Notification of any schedule conflict well in advance. The more prior notice, the better.
3. Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in athletic programs at Cass City Schools, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

**APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES:**

1. The treatment of your child, both mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

It can be very difficult to accept when your child does not play as much as hoped. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as those in the following paragraphs must be left to the discretion of the coach and should not be discussed.

**ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH THE COACH:**

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and parent. These conferences are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position.

Since research indicates a student involved in co-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, these programs have been established. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided within this article makes both your child's and your experience with the Cass City Public School Athletic Program less stressful and more enjoyable.

## **Cass City Public Schools-Athletics Coaches**

### **Hiring Policy**

1. All open positions will be posted per board policy prior to hiring.
2. The athletic director and superintendent will be responsible for interviewing all varsity athletic positions.
3. Any position under the varsity program will be interviewed by the varsity coach and the athletic director.
4. All positions will be required to go to the board for approval (including contracted positions).
5. Coaches' salaries are paid based on the Schedule B contract.
6. Coaches requiring additional staff above and beyond what is stated in the athletic policy will need to be done on a volunteer basis.

### **Coaches Code of Ethics**

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An athletic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect, and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the Cass City School District.

The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

1. The coach should always prioritize the safety and well-being of their athletes, even over winning. This includes making decisions about injured athletes' ability to play or train, and reporting any violations of policies or laws.
2. The Coach should treat all athletes equally, and avoid singling out or ignoring any players. They should also encourage participation and never devalue any player's role or potential.
3. The coach should use their power responsibly to reduce the potential for abuse and sexual harassment, and report any instances they witness. They should also be proactive in preventing bullying and hazing.
4. The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.
5. The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with

- players.
6. The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.
  7. The coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
  8. The coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with booster clubs, and administrators.
  9. The coach shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
  10. The coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
  11. The coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give a student special consideration.

**GO HAWKS!**