

# ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Clarke Prep School  
2023 - 2024

# Clarke Preparatory School Athletic Handbook

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Clarke Prep School Athletics! You are a part of a program with a long tradition of excellence. That tradition was built by the coaches and student-athletes who preceded you, and we strive each day to honor their legacy in the way we live and play. We Are Gators, and in everything we do, we honor our school and the people who wore it before us.

## **THE PROPER ROLE OF ATHLETICS**

We believe that athletics are an important part of the high school experience. However, it is important to note that our school exists primarily for the purposes of developing people of wisdom and integrity. Sports are a tool that enable us all to work toward that goal together.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The athletic director is responsible for the administration of the athletic programs as set by policies of the CPS Board of Directors, and the Alabama Independent School Association (AISA). The Athletic Director is under the direct supervision of the Head of School. The coaching staff of any athletic team is advised and directed by the Athletic Director and Head of School. The athletic department's main goal is for each sport to make a contribution to the overall development of the student-athlete, school, and community. Integrity, respect, and sportsmanship are essential to this process.

## **ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY**

Our thinking on this is simple: School First, Team Second, Me Third. Our athletic department exists to enable the school to fulfill its mission to develop people of wisdom and integrity. Our goal is for each team to reach its full potential and the best way to do that is for each player to develop to their full potential. The philosophy of the CPS Athletic Department is to provide opportunities for student-athletes to excel in skill, sportsmanship, self-discipline, and integrity. The CPS student Code of Conduct applies to all student-athletes on and off the field.

## **TRYOUTS / CUTS**

Our goal is that every student who wants to participate is able. However, with a finite amount of space and time, we may hold tryouts and cut some athletes.

- Each team's maximum size will be set by the coach after consulting with the AD.
- Coaches have final word regarding cuts. (Cheer will follow the Clarke Preparatory Cheerleader Regulations.)
- Cuts will be based on what is best for the specific team / program.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Clarke Prep athletes are subject to the AISA eligibility rules, found online at [aisaonline.org](http://aisaonline.org). In addition to meeting AISA eligibility rules, all CPS student-athletes must meet the criteria set forth in the CPS student handbook.

- A. Unless excused by the administration, students must attend 4 classes on the day competition is held. B. If an athlete quits a sport during the season, they will not be allowed to participate in another until the sport they quit has ended.
- C. Athletes may not practice or play while suspended / expelled from school.
- D. Athletes who prove detrimental to the team / program after repeated attempts at conflict resolution may be barred from participating by the Athletic Director or Head of School.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Learning to deal with both success and adversity as a mature person is one of the most durable, valuable lessons an athletic program can teach. To be clear with our athletes, parents, and coaches, we have developed the following policies in support of good sportsmanship:

- **First Ejection:** Any coach or player ejected will meet with their direct superior and may be required to pay any AISA fines from their own pocket. Players who are ejected may be benched, suspended, or dismissed from the team at the discretion of the coach and / or athletic director.
- **Second Ejection:** Any coach or player will be suspended for one game after their second ejection. This suspension may be lengthened at the discretion of the coach and / or athletic director.
- **Third Ejection:** Any coach or player ejected three times in one season will be dismissed from the team.
- **Last Games:** Any suspension that results from the last game of a season will be carried into the next season.
- **Fan Ejections:** Any fan ejected will be required to pay any AISA fines out of their pocket. Fans ejected multiple times may be suspended or barred from attending athletic events by administration. In addition to our internal policy, we are also subject to the Alabama Independent School Association and the State of Alabama:

***AISA Sportsmanship Policy:*** The AISA will not tolerate and/or condone demonstrations of poor professionalism or sportsmanship, especially displays which lead to altercations/or forfeiture. The AISA Athletic Committee and the AISA State Board will take a very firm and rigid stand in matters of this concern and will levy harsh sanctions on those involved. Note: Any person guilty of unsportsmanlike involvement with the players, coaches, officials, and/or other fans before, during, or after any AISA interscholastic event may be fined \$500.00 and the school(s) represented by the involved may be placed on a minimum of (1) year probation. Schools are responsible for all fines levied.

**Alabama Sports Official Bill 36:** Alabama has severe punishment for angry sports fans that attack game officials, coaches, and administrators. The crimes of harassing, menacing, and assaulting the above are harsher than normal for these convictions. This law applies to all levels of athletics.

***CLARKE PREP SCHOOL HAS THE RIGHT TO HANDLE ALL SITUATIONS THAT ARISE FROM POOR SPORTSMANSHIP FROM PLAYERS, PARENTS, FANS, AND COACHES AT THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.***

## **APPEARANCE / DRESS CODE**

Dress code for each team will be set by the individual coach; failure to follow the team dress code will be disciplined by the coach. Also, the dress code will follow the school handbook

## **AISA APPEARANCE POLICY**

Per the AISA, athletes may not compete with exposed body art, piercings (other than one earring per ear for females), facial hair, non-traditional hairstyles or hair coloring.

## **MULTIPLE SPORT ATHLETES**

In the event a student-athlete competes in two (2) sports during the same season, the following will serve as the guidelines for the coaches, family, and student-athlete for managing practices, games, etc.

- 1) Games take priority over practice
- 2) Varsity takes priority over junior high
- 3) Region games take priority over non-region games
- 4) Athletes who start take priority over bench players
- 5) If all is equal at this point, then the primary sport will take priority over the other sport.

As each of our programs are reliant upon athletes who play multiple sports, conflicts can arise. All care should be made to not place the student-athlete at the center of the conflict between two (2) sports/programs. If a situation occurs that cannot be determined by these criteria, both coaches should confer with the Athletic Director to determine the proper course of action.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES**

1. Understand that building young people of wisdom and integrity is more valuable than winning at any cost.
2. Clearly communicate expectations and schedules to athletes in advance and follow the schedule you set.
3. Support the school community and enforce school rules.
4. Support the entire athletic program and recognize that, as a small school, we must share athletes and resources to be successful.
5. Set an example of ethical and moral conduct in all personal contact with student-athletes, parents, officials, the media, the public, and AISA.
6. Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity.
7. Model consistency and respect in the way you treat athletes, parents, colleagues, opponents, and officials.
8. Honor the spirit and letter of the rules of the sport.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT-ATHLETES**

1. Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity.
2. Be respectful in the way you treat teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials.
3. Be coachable.
4. Follow the expectations and policies communicated by your coach.
5. Value what's best for the team over what's best for the individual.
6. Mentor younger athletes / students.
7. Love your sport, but value learning over athletic pursuits.
8. Maintain team unity.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS/FANS**

All parents/fans are asked to support the athletic program by adhering to the following expectations:

1. Do not discuss playing time or positioning with coaches; that is a matter to be handled between athlete and coach.
2. Give coaches 24 hours after a game before approaching them to discuss issues.
3. Respect the time of coaches by scheduling any necessary meetings in advance via phone, text, or email.
4. Refrain from conversations that encourage dissension.
5. Encourage athletes to communicate with their coach, rather than fighting their battles for them.
6. Understand that our coaches place the needs of the team and school over the needs of any individual athlete.
7. Refrain from criticizing coaches in front of the athletes they coach, since coaches are not permitted to criticize parents in front of their children.
8. Do not converse with athletes (yours or others) while games are in progress.
9. Be respectful to all athletes, fans, coaches, and officials – no profanity, obscene cheers or gestures, negative signs, or other actions that would demean individuals and/or the sport

### **PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION**

#### ***Communications from Coaches to Parents***

1. General coaching philosophy
2. Team / player expectations and requirements
3. Practice / game schedule and location
4. Injury procedure / information

#### ***Communication from Athletes to Coaches***

1. Scheduling conflicts (in advance)
2. Personal issues or concerns regarding playing time, positioning, etc.

#### ***Communications from Parents***

1. Concerns about issues other than those listed below.

#### ***Not Appropriate for Parental Discussion with Coaches***

1. Playing time\*
2. Team position\*
3. Team strategy or play calling
4. Other student-athletes

\*Items 1 & 2 may be addressed by the players with the coaches following the procedures outlined below.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION at CPS:**

We believe that clear and open communication is the best path to conflict resolution. Conflicts are only successfully resolved when the affected parties get together and talk it out. This is modeled in scripture, as we are told to approach the source of a problem personally, rather than discussing the issue with others. As a matter of policy, CPS insists that our community discuss their issues face-to-face, with maturity. Nothing in the history of the world has ever gotten

better through gossip and backbiting. This is one of the most important lessons we can teach our children. When conflicts or issues arise, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution:

1. Student-athlete contacts coach. The student-athlete should present the conflict/issue to the coach as soon as possible. Student-athletes need to become their own advocates, as this is an essential part of the transition to adulthood. The majority of the problems can be resolved at this step.
2. If this is not possible, or has not resolved the issue, a parent can contact the coach directly. Do not approach a coach with a complaint before, during, or just after a practice or game. Both parties need a 24 hour "cooling off period." Call, text or email to schedule a time to meet.
3. If resolution cannot be reached in a meeting with the coach, schedule a meeting with the athletic director. If the complaint concerns the AD, proceed to step four. The AD will call all involved parties together (including the athlete) to work toward resolution.
4. Contact the head of school. The head of school will call all involved parties together (including the athlete) to work toward resolution.
5. Contact the Board of Directors. The Board may choose to interview involved parties or may conduct an internal investigation without interviews. The decision by the Board of Directors is final.

Students and parents may be confident that following protocol to voice a complaint/issue will not result in any sort of retribution toward the athlete. We make great efforts to train our staff on proper conflict resolution, and each staff member is committed to treating each student fairly, even when issues arise.

### **TEAM RULES**

The following rules apply to all CPS teams. Each coach may supplement these rules at their discretion. A copy of the coach's supplemental rules should be communicated clearly to each player.

1. Players must maintain eligibility according to AISA and CPS requirements.
2. Players are required to attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach. Players not excused may be disciplined by the coach. Two (2) unexcused practices and the student could be dismissed from the team. Vacations are unexcused practices. Legitimate unexcused absences can be discussed at the discretion of the coach or Athletic Director.
3. Missed practices are made up as determined by the coach.
4. Players are to be on time for practices, games, team meetings, etc.
5. Players guilty of inappropriate conduct during non-school events/hours that negatively affect the CPS athletic program will be disciplined by the coach.
6. Players who quit a sport during the season will not be allowed to practice or compete in another sport until the one they quit has ended.
7. Students who receive an in-school suspension (ISS) will be ineligible to practice (during or after school) in any extracurricular activities for the time of the suspension. Students who receive an out of school suspension (OSS) will be ineligible to participate (practice, play, travel) for the time of the suspension.
8. If a student fails to bring any part of their uniform to a game, coaches cannot take a uniform or part of a uniform from one player to be used by another player.
9. Players must put the team first.

## **SCHEDULING AND PRACTICES**

1. All scheduling must be approved by the Athletic Director and coordinated with the school calendar. AISA area and area games receive first priority in scheduling. Other games should be with quality programs requiring limited travel.
2. Unless necessary, teams should never schedule two away games between Monday and Thursday of the same week.
3. The CPS school board sets the maximum allowable number of games per week / per month / per season.
4. Games should not be scheduled on Wednesday unless scheduled by AISA.
5. No mandatory practices on Sunday without administrative approval; administration will only approve Sunday practices for games with season-ending implications.
6. Wednesday practices should end by 5:30.
7. Summer practices / conditioning are mandatory as assigned by coaches.

## **FACILITIES**

1. General repair and maintenance of all facilities is the responsibility of the coaches and supported by the school.
2. Players may be used by coaches for facility maintenance.
3. Coaches and players should leave benches and locker rooms clean.
4. Coaches should make sure all facilities are properly secured including turning off lights prior to leaving.

## **EQUIPMENT**

1. Coaches shall not enter into any agreements with any company to purchase equipment or uniforms without approval of the Administration.
2. Coaches should keep the Athletic Director informed of equipment needs.
3. No equipment or uniforms may be ordered without an approved Purchase Order.
4. Coaches are responsible for managing the inventory of their equipment.
5. All equipment and uniforms should be properly secured at all times.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Because of scheduling and travel time, it is sometimes necessary for teams to leave school early. It is the responsibility of the athlete to arrange with teachers to make up any missed work. Students are expected to make up work within the time limits set by the teacher.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

When available athletes must travel on CPS transportation. When transportation is not provided, parents may drive their child to games. No Student will be allowed to drive to a game. Athletes wishing to ride home with parents after away events must notify their coach if school transportation is provided.

## **UNIFORMS**

Athletes are responsible for taking proper care of uniforms and must return them in good condition at the time specified by the coach. Lost or damaged uniforms must be replaced by the athlete.

## **ATHLETIC FUNDING**

Funds for operating the athletic program are generated by the school through participation fees, advertising, gate admission, concessions, merchandise sales, donations, and fund raisers. The Athletic Director (in consultation with individual coaches) and the Head of School develop the yearly athletic budget. Athletic fees are due and payable before the first official day of practice. Participation will not be allowed until fees are paid.

## **QUITTING A SPORT**

After ten practices (or the first game) have passed, an athlete who quits for any reason other than injury may not participate in another sport until the sport they quit has ended. Any uniform / spirit pack fees will still be due; sports fees may be prorated at the discretion of the coach and athletic director. The following consequences are in place for students that quit a sport(s) more than once:

1<sup>st</sup> Time to Quit: The player may not participate in another sport until the sport they quit has ended.

2<sup>nd</sup> Time to Quit: The player must sit out 10% of the games of the next sport the player commits to.

3<sup>rd</sup> Time to Quit: The player must sit out of all sports for one calendar year.

## **DISCLAIMER**

CPS reserves the right to amend, alter, or delete portions of the handbook throughout the course of the school year as the Board and Administration deem necessary and proper without prior notice.

-----

I acknowledge that I have read the Clarke Prep Athletic Handbook and will abide by the policies and procedures herein, at all times.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Player(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date