

Coventry Public Schools

Athletic Handbook

Coventry High School
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Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School
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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the student-athlete and their family with an overview of the Coventry Public Schools (CPS) Interscholastic Athletic Program and the policies, procedures, and rules that govern it. Questions regarding any material in this handbook, as well as questions about any aspect of the program not addressed in this booklet, should be directed to the Director of Athletics.

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Coventry High School is a member of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League (RIIL), while Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School is a member of the Rhode Island Principals Committee on Athletics (RIPCOA). The purpose of both organizations is to organize, regulate, and promote interscholastic athletics within Rhode Island. As RIIL and RIPCOA member schools, CPS abides by their [rules and regulations](#) and subscribes to the guidelines set forth by these respective organizations. In addition, CPS rules also govern the CPS athletic programs.

- [CPS Policy Manual](#)
- [Coventry High School Student Handbook](#)
- [Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Student Handbook](#)

Philosophy

CPS Interscholastic Athletic Program is an integral part of our educational community and curriculum. Therefore, a comprehensive program of athletic activities is vital to the educational development of every student-athlete. As a considerable part of each student-athlete's educational development, CPS Athletics strives to help every student-athlete become the best person, student, self-advocate, and athlete possible. To fulfill this lofty goal the athletic program provides a variety of experiences to aid in the development of favorable habits and attitudes in student-athletes that will prepare them for adult life.

Winning is not the sole purpose of athletics at CPS; rather, competing at full potential with sportsmanship, tremendous effort, and a positive attitude are the objectives for every team. Ultimately, the goal of CPS Athletics is to teach our student-athletes to strive for excellence in all they do, work hard every day to improve week by week, and realize the potential of the team and every individual. CPS and its coaches will guide each student-athlete to win with grace, lose with dignity, respect their opponents, and set an example of sportsmanship.

Statement on Sportsmanship

Coaches have the primary responsibility for setting a respectful pattern of behavior for athletic competitions. The conduct of the coach in practice, competitions, and outside life establishes the tone of behavior to be projected to all participants. Coaches are role models for how to properly handle success as well as disappointment, and realize that student-athletes, parents/guardians, and fans expect only the highest standards of ethical behavior from a coach at all times.

Student-athletes are responsible for playing each competition in a highly competitive way from beginning to end and according to the spirit and the rules of the competition. The student-athlete is responsible to compete and behave in practice and competitions in a way that brings honor to their team, athletic department, school, and family.

All participants, including spectators, are responsible for treating the officials with the respect and honor that is due to an authority figure. Participants are to appreciate the competition officials' hard work and respect their decisions at all times. All stakeholders must remember that athletic competition is only a competition - not a matter of life or death for the player, coach, school, official, fan, community, state, or nation.

Student-Athlete Requirements for Participation

Academic Eligibility

In order to participate unrestricted in interscholastic athletics, a student-athlete must pass all of their courses at the end of the most recent marking period. Therefore, a student-athletes's eligibility will be determined equally and fairly at the conclusion of every quarter as follows:

- Eligibility for the first quarter will be based on the Final Average in each course at the completion of the previous school year.
- Eligibility for the second quarter will be based on first-quarter grades.
- Eligibility for the third quarter will be based on the second-quarter grades. • Eligibility for the fourth quarter is based on third-quarter grades.

The student-athlete is NOT eligible if:

- The student-athlete is excused from physical education for medical reasons (including a nurse's note).
- The student-athlete's nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs before September 1 in the current academic year.
- The student-athlete has represented the school in any one sport for four seasons or has been in attendance for more than eight semesters beginning on the first day of enrollment in the 9th grade.
- The student-athlete has changed schools without a change of legal residence unless a transfer rule affidavit is approved by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League.
- The student-athlete does not comply with all rules outlined by the RIIL and RIPCOA.

Attendance Requirements

- Students must be in school by 10:20 am to participate in and/or attend games and practices.
- Any student who is dismissed for medical, dental, legal appointments, etc. must have such dismissal pre-approved by the athletic or assistant athletic director. Students must return to school from the appointment with verification documentation given to the main office and the athletic department. If the school day has ended, the verification must be given to the coach to be eligible to participate. (parent notes will not suffice)

Athletic Department Eligibility

All student-athletes are required to register before the day of tryouts. This includes proof of a current physical and completion of all registration form sections. New student-athletes must also submit a notarized Assumption of Risk form (located on the document section of the RIIL.org website) to the Director of Athletics before the start of their team's season.

Student-athletes must have the following paperwork completed before they are allowed to practice:

1. Current Physical

- a. Physicals are valid for thirteen (13) months.
- b. Physicals must be completed prior to any athletic participation.

To try out for a team, a student-athlete must have a health physical on file prior to participation. The physical covers all sports provided the examination occurred within 13 months of the ending date of the respective athletic season(s).

2. Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

- a. Acknowledgement must be completed at the beginning of every season.
- b. Each parent/guardian will certify they understand the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the school district.

3. Personal Insurance Form & Waiver (annually must include Ins. Company & Policy Number)

- a. All student-athletes must have insurance to participate in Athletics at CPS.
- b. In the absence of personal insurance for a student-athlete, enrollment in the School Insurance is mandatory.

4. School Insurance (annually)

- a. Mandatory 24-hour insurance coverage is required for a student-athlete who does not have personal insurance.
- b. School insurance is optional for student-athletes with personal insurance.

The school has arrangements with an insurance company through which parents/guardians can secure accident/medical insurance for the student-athletes at a nominal cost.

The student-athlete participating in interscholastic sports is required to carry *accident/medical insurance*. The school does not assume responsibility for medical expenses resulting from injuries to participants in sports. The family's personal medical insurance is the first step in covering

medical expenses. Accident/medical insurance can only be used to help pay for expenses not covered by your personal insurance.

[The Rhode Island Interscholastic Injury Fund](#) will cover student-athletes, coaches, and officials who participate in yearly scheduled scrimmages at the high school level. Please see the Director of Athletics for additional information.

5. [NEHS Concussion Information Sheet](#) (online, annually) Rhode Island State Law requires that student-athletes and parents/guardians review materials about signs and symptoms of a concussion. Online consent is required by the student-athlete and parents/guardians.

6. Signed acknowledgment of the Athletic handbook including requirements and expectations.

7. RIIL [Assumption of Risk form](#) (once in a student-athlete's career)

Student-athletes and parents/guardians must realize the risk of serious injury, which may be a result of athletic participation. To participate in interscholastic sports, student-athletes and parents/guardians are required to sign the Rhode Island Interscholastic League's [Assumption of Risk form](#).

This form must be notarized and submitted to the coach prior to participation. This process is required only once during the four years of high school for each new student-athlete, including the transfer of a student-athlete.

Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Athletic Participation Requirements

All student-athletes wanting to participate in any interscholastic sport must have the following paperwork **completed** before the first day of tryouts.

1. [Physical](#):

- a. Physicals are valid for thirteen (13) months.
- b. Physicals must be completed prior to any athletic participation.

To try out for a team, a student-athlete must have a valid health physical on file prior to participation. The physical covers all sports provided the examination occurred within 13 months of the ending date of the respective athletic season(s).

2. [RIPCOA Risk Form](#):

All new student-athletes must completely fill out one (1) form and have it notarized once during their Middle School career. The completed form must be turned in to the front office prior to tryouts. The CPS can provide a Notary to facilitate the completion of the form if needed.

3. Acknowledgement of the Parent/Guardian Permission Form:

- a. The form must be completed at the beginning of every season.
- b. A parent/guardian will acknowledge the understanding of the athletic eligibility rules and policies of the school district.

4. **School Insurance:**

- a. Mandatory coverage is required for student-athletes who do not have personal insurance. All student-athletes must provide proof of insurance prior to practicing with a team. Any student-athlete with a hardship should be referred to the Director of Athletics.
- b. School insurance is optional for student-athletes with personal insurance.

The school has arrangements with an insurance company through which parents/guardians can obtain accident/medical insurance for student-athletes at a nominal cost. A student-athlete participating in interscholastic sports is required to carry accident/medical insurance. The school does not assume responsibility for medical expenses resulting from injuries to participants in sports. The parent/guardian's personal medical insurance is the first step in covering medical expenses. Accident/medical insurance can only be used to help pay for expenses not covered by personal insurance.

5. **Concussion Awareness Statement:**

Rhode Island State Law requires that student-athletes and parents/guardians review materials about signs and symptoms of a concussion. Online consent is required by the student-athlete and parents/guardians.

All paperwork must be complete and uploaded and Assumption of Risk forms must be handed into the front office prior to the start of the first tryouts or first day of tryouts. No student-athlete will be allowed to participate without the completion of all the above paperwork.

Selection of the Team and Determining Playing Time on Varsity

Selection of athletic teams and determination of playing time during varsity competitions is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those teams. Their actions, however, must be consistent with the philosophy and rules of the athletic department while fielding the most competitive team possible with our given student-athlete population. A student-athlete's attendance, attitude, and effort must be the first determination. Once a student-athlete fulfills those three requirements, ability within the sport becomes a major factor in determining the student-athlete's role on the team and playing time.

The team cut process will include three elements. Each student-athlete should have:

- Competed in a minimum of three (3) practice sessions.
- Performed in at least one intra-squad scrimmage when adequate facilities are available.
- Be personally informed of the cut and the reasons for the action by the coach either through Google Classroom or in a face-to-face meeting.

Sub-Varsity Teams

Junior varsity (JV), Freshman, and Middle School athletic programs are designed to maximize student-athlete opportunities to participate. The programs are intended as feeder programs for the high school. The ultimate goal of these programs is to push all student-athletes to strive for excellence while balancing 1) the athletic development of all student-athletes and 2) being a competitive team within the state. It is in the best interest of all student-athletes that a positive educational environment is built to allow coaches to teach the value of sportsmanship, excellence, attendance, full effort, a positive attitude, and the fundamentals of the individual sport.

Qualifications for a Varsity Letter

The Director of Athletics, in consultation with the head coach of each varsity team, will develop a list of qualifications to attain a varsity letter. These qualifications will be shared with the student-athletes prior to the start of the season.

Individual Coach's Rules

Coaches may establish (with advanced approval of the Director of Athletics) additional rules and regulations for their respective teams. These rules must be given in writing by coaches to all team members and explained fully prior to the start of the season. Penalties for violation of team rules must also be in writing and will be administered by the coach. Additional team rules must be consistent with all other school rules, regulations, and CPS policies. Copies of these rules will be kept on file in the Director of Athletics office.

Coaches may take reasonable disciplinary action pertaining to any problem that may arise. Any action by a student-athlete that requires disciplinary action shall be reported to the Director of Athletics.

Transportation to/from Away Competitions

Student-athletes must travel to and from competitions in transportation provided by the school.

The only exceptions are:

- Injury to a student-athlete which would require alternate transportation.
- **Prior (24 hours) written arrangement** between the student-athlete's parents/guardians, coach, and Director of Athletics for the student-athlete to take alternate Transportation.

RI Interscholastic Injury Fund

Under certain circumstances, the [Rhode Island Interscholastic Injury Fund](#) provides some assistance for medical expenses not covered by either personal insurance or accident/medical insurance for high school athletes. The Rhode Island Interscholastic Injury Fund is a nonprofit organization that provides financial assistance for medical expenses incurred by a student-athlete during Interscholastic League competition. The Injury Fund will consider payment for medical bills and physical therapy above what the primary medical insurance of the student-athlete will pay. The

Injury Fund is not an insurance company, but a board of dedicated volunteers committed to the health and well-being of Rhode Island student-athletes. Parents/guardians are asked to complete an application to request reimbursement from the Injury Fund.

Return to Play Policy

No student-athlete who has been injured sufficiently to necessitate medical attention by a physician may resume playing (competitions or practices) until a written physician's medical clearance has been received by the Director of Athletics and School Nurse. This clearance will be kept on file and provided to the Head Coach as soon as clearance is received and reviewed.

After a student-athlete is sidelined with an injury for which they seek professional medical care, the following must be observed in order to return to physical participation:

1. A medical release needs to be signed by the doctor who treated the student-athlete and must be submitted to the School Nurse and Director of Athletics.
2. A Director of Athletics/Head Coach/Student-Athlete conference will take place to discuss the student-athlete's limitations and the plan for returning to play. The coach will communicate with the student-athlete, parent/guardian, and the Athletic Department for the plan to return if necessary.

Concussion Protocol

Coaches should always err on the side of caution when dealing with all injuries, especially those that may involve a concussion.

As a rule: *“When in Doubt, Sit Them Out!!!”*

Concussion Management Best Practice Guidelines from the NFHS & RIIL

- All coaches shall complete a head injury training program.
- All student-athletes and parents/guardians shall sign an acknowledgement that they have received a head injury fact sheet.
- Any student-athlete who has sustained a head injury or has been hit in the head shall be removed from play immediately.
- Any student-athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the competition or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.
- The student-athletes physician will determine if a student-athlete is cleared for full or graded return to physical activity. If the student-athlete is cleared for a graded return, the below protocol will be followed unless counter-indicated by the student-athlete's physician. The school nurse or school physician will then be responsible for managing the graded return Five(5) Day Return to Play Protocol through daily student-athlete check-ins.
 - Day 1 - Static Exercise. Stretching & Aerobic Exercises: 20-30 minutes of activity (Exercise bike, Elliptical, or light jog).

- Day 2 - Static Exercise. Stretching, Aerobic, & Resistance Exercises. Weight lifting permitted (50-75% of usual routine).
- Day 3 – Heavy, non-contact physical activity providing no symptoms, can return either during or after activity (Extensive sprint-specific drills, agility training, plyometrics, and repetitive jumping drills for 45-60 minutes).
- Day 4 – Full contact drills & practice.
- Day 5 – Return to competition action.

Vacation

A student-athlete who makes a team is expected to be present at every practice and competition. Absence from the team could cause the student-athlete to lose playing time and to possibly lose the position.

Code of Conduct for Student-Athletes

A firm and fair policy of enforcement is necessary to uphold the regulations and standards of the athletic department. Further, the CPS believes that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a sound athletic program. Student-athletes are expected to consistently abide by this code of conduct which will earn them the honor and respect that participation and competition in interscholastic athletics affords. Conduct that results in dishonor to the student-athlete, the team, or the school will not be tolerated. All rules apply to all student-athletes including managers, trainers, cheerleaders, and all other student-athletes representing the school district. Some examples of inappropriate behavior that may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension or removal from the team include:

- Blatant disrespect to coaches, teachers, and/or peers
- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Sexual Harassment
- Social Media Misuse
- Cyber Bullying
- Inappropriate Use of Technology
- Destruction of School Property
- Cutting Classes

A. Sportsmanship

"Good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, integrity, and respect for others" are the guiding principles that permeate all interscholastic activities in CPS. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities, which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. All individuals, regardless of their role, are expected to model sportsmanship because they influence the behavior of others.

STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST:

- Appreciate and understand that their behavior is observed and emulated by many who are younger.
- Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by the RIIL. Accept and understand the seriousness of their responsibility and the privilege of representing their school and community.

- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the competition thoroughly and discuss them with parents/guardians, fans, and peers.
- Treat opponents the way they would like to be treated, as a guest or friend.
- Refrain from taunting, trash-talking, or making any kind of derogatory remarks, especially comments of an ethnic, racial, or sexual nature.
- Wish opponents good luck before the competition and congratulate them in a sincere manner that they would like to receive following a victory or defeat.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of competition officials; and Win with humility and lose with grace.

B. Alcohol and Drugs, Including Tobacco

Medical research substantiates that the use of alcohol and mood-modifying substances produces harmful effects on the human body and will affect athletic performance. Student-athletes cannot compromise their participation with substance abuse. Student-athletes who experiment with such substances jeopardize program morale, reputation, and success, and they do physical harm to themselves and risk personal injury and harm to others during their activity.

A student-athlete must decide if they want to hold a leadership position or want to be part of an athletic team. If they do wish to be a participant, they must commit in order to do so. A big part of this decision means refraining from the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and steroids.

Student-athletes are considered in violation of this policy if they “possess”, “consume” (including being under the influence of), and/or “distribute”, other than as prescribed by a physician for personal use, any tobacco product, controlled drug and/or intoxicant or steroid at any time whether during school, at any school activity, on school property, or at locations off school property.

Alcohol and Drugs

For a first offense, a student-athlete will be:

- Suspended from all interscholastic competitions and practices for the next fifteen (15) consecutive calendar days. After ten (10) days, the student-athlete may return to the team for practice only. The suspension must include at least the next two (2) scheduled interscholastic competitions of the season. The student-athlete will be fully reinstated for athletic competition after the fifteenth day, once all the requirements have been met.
- Reinstated to the team, provided the student-athlete meets with the Director of Athletics, Coach, and Student Assistance Counselor.
- Parents/guardians and the student-athlete will meet with the Director of Athletics and Assistant Principal before reinstatement to the team.
- Required to forfeit their captaincy as captain if they hold that position.
- If there is not sufficient time remaining in that season to complete the suspension, the suspension will be carried over to the next interscholastic sport season in which that student-athlete participates. For any additional violation in the same calendar year or subsequent calendar year, a student-athlete will be suspended from all interscholastic athletic competitions and extracurricular activities for 365 calendar

days.

Cigarette, Cigar and Smokeless Tobacco, other banned substances A student-athlete who uses or possesses tobacco products, including but not limited to, cigarettes e-cigarettes, cigars or smokeless tobacco, etc., will be in violation of school policy.

For a first offense, a student-athlete will be:

- Suspended from all interscholastic competitions and practices for the next seven (7) consecutive calendar days.
 - After five (5) days, the student-athlete may return to the team for practice only.
 - The suspension must include at least the next one (1) scheduled interscholastic competition of the season.
 - The student-athlete will be reinstated for athletic competition after the seventh day, once all the requirements have been met. This suspension will be completed during a student-athletes season. Reinstatement to the team will take place, provided the student-athlete meets with the Director of Athletics, Coach, and Student Assistance Counselor.
- Parents/guardians and the student-athlete will meet with the Director of Athletics and Assistant Principal before reinstatement to the team
- Required to forfeit their captaincy if they hold that position.
- If there is not sufficient time remaining in that season to complete the suspension, the suspension will be carried over to the next interscholastic sport season in which that student-athlete participates.
- For any additional violation in the same calendar year or subsequent calendar year, a student-athlete will be suspended from all interscholastic athletic competitions and extracurricular activities for thirty (30) calendar days.
- For a third or more offenses, a student-athlete will be suspended from all interscholastic athletic competitions and extracurricular activities for 365 calendar days each time.

Hazing and Bullying

Under no circumstances will any type of hazing and/or initiation be tolerated. The term “hazing”, as defined by Rhode Island State Law, means any conduct or method of initiation that any student-athlete organization, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student-athlete or other person (abbreviated from [State of Rhode Island Hazing Law, section 11-21-1\(b\)](#)). Coaches are responsible for making sure these types of activities do not occur on their team. Any student-athlete who participates in hazing of another student shall be suspended from all interscholastic activities for one (1) year.

Parent/Guardian and Coach Communication

Parents/guardians have the right to understand the expectations placed on the student-athlete who participates in the CPS athletic program.

Parents/guardians expect the coach will provide the following:

- Coaching Philosophy

- Expectations the coach has for the student-athlete
- Locations and times of all practices and competitions
- Team requirements (ie: practices, special equipment)
- The procedure to be followed should the student-athlete be injured during participation • Reasons for denying a student-athlete participation in an athletic activity

The coach will expect the parent/guardian to provide the following:

- Communication of concerns
- Communication of any schedule conflicts well in advance.

Process for Conflict Resolution

1. If there is a concern regarding the physical or mental health of a student-athlete, the parent/guardian may speak to the coach directly.
2. For all other concerns, a student-athlete should attempt to resolve them with a coach in a private, respectful manner.
3. If the student-athlete meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution, a parent/guardian may call and set up an appointment with the coach. The Parent/Coach meeting should never happen without an attempt by the student-athlete and coach to resolve a concern. ***The parent/guardian should not attempt to confront a coach before or after a competition or practice.***
4. If the parent/guardian and coach meeting does not resolve the conflict, the parent/guardian may contact the Director of Athletics to discuss the situation.
5. A parent/guardian may appeal a decision to the Principal of Coventry High School or Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School.
6. [CPS Appeal Policy](#)

See below:

COVENTRY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

I have received a copy of the Coventry High School and Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School Athletic Handbook, which outlines the responsibilities of all coaches and student-athletes and the policies and procedures of CPS. If I have any questions, I should contact the Director of Athletics. This handbook does not create an express or implied contract. I understand that the information in this handbook represents guidelines to assist coaches and student-athletes. All CPS policies, including, but not limited to those policies referenced in this handbook, are published on the district website under the **District Information** tab. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between provisions within this handbook and any CPS policy, the provisions within CPS policies shall prevail. I understand it is my responsibility to read all CPS policies, and I agree to comply with all the guidelines, policies, and procedures of CPS. This Handbook is subject to change without notice. All changes in procedure/policy will supersede or eliminate those found in this Handbook. I will be notified of such changes through district communication.

Student Athlete Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____