**CIAC CLASS ACT PROGRAM**

**(Revised \_\_/\_\_/2023)**

The CIAC is committed to a philosophy of education based athletics. Learning to uphold the highest level of character under the pressured situations that present themselves through sports is our highest valued educational outcome in athletics. Articulating those expectations sets the direction for what we hold as most important. These Class Act Standards are set forth as a statement of what we strive to achieve and are intended to create a consistent framework for acceptable behavior from all stakeholders including participants, coaches, students, spectators and parents.

Education in athletics is a process. When individuals fall short of our ideals, we look on it as an opportunity to grow. We hope that our students will always be evolving into better versions of themselves.

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CLASS ACT SCHOOL?

When schools commit to being a Class Act School they are agreeing to strive, as well as they can manage, to achieve the standards and make the effort to follow the processes stated in this document. Class Act is not a reward program. Class Act is not a designation that the school has reached a level of sportsmanship. Class Act is a commitment to pursue these principles toward learning to be better as a school, athletic program, coach, team, parent and spectator.

The CIAC’s ***Class Act Schools*** initiative is designed to empower schools and particularly students to take ownership for all issues related to sportsmanship within the athletics department. Doing so includes striving to follow an established set of guidelines for behavior at sporting events and create a student-led group to monitor and address sportsmanship concerns within the school. The CIAC will serve as the sponsor for the program, which aims to provide a framework enabling schools to promote, encourage, and monitor positive sportsmanship within their departments.

CIAC membership has expressed that one challenge in promoting positive sportsmanship is consistency. Actions that one school might not object to are considered inappropriate at another school. By choosing to be a part of the program a school is defining what is considered acceptable actions within interscholastic athletics, and then challenging its student leaders to address concerns either within their school or with an opponent.

# CLASS ACT STANDARDS

The CIAC acknowledges that the school administration is responsible for the athletic program, including making both broad and specific policies and procedures related to sportsmanship and the conduct of activities in the school. To that end, the CIAC urges each school’s Principal and Athletic Director to adopt the following sportsmanship procedures and standards for their school and to champion the “Class Act” sportsmanship program.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CIAC**

1. Articulate and disseminate the expectations for standards of behavior in athletics for its member schools.
2. Provide support for the development of Class Act Programs and Class Act Councils.
3. Support and train new Athletic Directors (along with CAAD) on the responsibilities of the athletic director and the rules of the CIAC related to sportsmanship.
4. The CIAC Board of Control will hold schools accountable for incidents of gross misbehavior.
5. The CIAC is not a policing or supervisory agency for its member schools.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

The Athletic Director is the key person in maintaining an educational atmosphere in all aspects of the school’s sports program. Most of what is described below falls within their realm of responsibility. Committing to Class Act SAVES TIME because prevention is more educational, is a more positive experience and is more efficient than resolving conflicts. Additionally, empowering students fosters a growth mindset and shares the burden of responsibility.

1. Register as a Class Act School on the CIAC Website.
2. Form a student-based council (“Class Act Council” or any other name that fits the school and is responsible for sportsmanship) that will assist the athletic department in overseeing the implementation of and adherence to these standards.
3. Emphasize that all school personnel; coaches, game workers, faculty, security – follow CIAC expectations for good sportsmanship during the regular season as well as CIAC tournaments.
4. Require that athletes and members of the student body conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon your school. Any unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of students and adults is unacceptable and will be addressed with clear and appropriate measures.
5. Articulate the “Expectations of All Spectators” to the public at sports events. (Read by PA announcers prior to each contest where a PA system is available. Post the CIAC sportsmanship standards of conduct prominently at all possible sports venues.)
6. Require that athletes and parents/guardians, sign an acknowledgement which would show that they have read and understand the CIAC sportsmanship standards. (Through permission forms or student athletic handbook.)
7. Disseminate the CIAC sportsmanship standards as widely as possible using whatever means are most effective at your school. Communicate during the pre-season with student-athletes, coaches and parents to review the CIAC sportsmanship standards. (This communication may take place in any format that is practical and feasible at the school.)
8. Designate specific seating areas for students, bands, adults and visitors. (If possible, opposing student bodies should be separated.)
9. Arrange for adequate security and supervision at contests as needed.
10. Adhere to the CIAC guidelines for welcoming officials.
11. Take measures to prevent fans from getting near or on the playing area and around the players benches. After the contest, prevent fans from going onto the playing area.
12. Train coaches on the “CIAC Procedures for Coach/Official Communication”. (Include behavioral expectations for coaches during orientation, preseason meetings, the coaches handbook and reinforce these ideals frequently.)
13. Address the first sign of negative behavior at contests immediately. Do not let comments go unchecked.

**EXPECTATIONS OF ALL SPECTATORS (INCLUDING PARENTS):**

1. Adhere to the host school’s acceptable dress code at all home and away contests commensurate with classroom behavior. For CIAC tournament contests all spectators will be appropriately attired with their torso completely covered and with no visible degrading or demeaning writings/logos.
2. Any signs must be positive in nature, reference only the school supported by the sign maker, and must be pre-approved by the athletic director of the school referenced in the sign.
3. During outdoor sports, no air horns or horns of any kind or whistles will be used, and any other noisemakers will be allowed with the host athletic director’s approval and only be used during “dead ball” situations to celebrate good play.
4. During indoor sports, no noise makers will be used. Pep bands are allowable at a home contest if the school provides adult supervision and the band only plays during “dead ball” situations.
5. Spectators will cheer positively to support their team, and will not cheer negatively against the opponent. (Schools and leagues may adopt a “No Negatives, No Names, No Numbers” slogan.)
6. Spectators will show respect for the game officials and their decisions.
7. Spectators will show respect during the playing of the National Anthem.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF LEAGUES

1. Sportsmanship should be on the agenda at all league leadership meetings.
2. All CIAC Leagues will encourage each of its members to be a Class Act School. Leagues may make it mandatory, as a prerequisite to its membership, that schools must be a Class Act School.
3. Leagues are encouraged to adopt a rating system whereby each team, coach and spectator group in every sport is rated on their sportsmanship. Develop sport specific criteria from which programs can be rated.
4. Leagues are encouraged to develop a recognition system within the league for sportsmanship.
5. Leagues should create a format where students, coaches, and athletic directors can meet regularly to discuss sportsmanship standards, create positive programs in the league, support student leadership development, and resolve issues as they arise.
6. Schools and Athletic Directors in the league should maintain cordial relationships and professional communication.
7. Support other schools in their effort to maintain standards of behavior for your fans at away contests.
8. Adopt a pregame announcement that is made by students/captains of each team at home contests where possible.

**GAME PERSONNEL/ANNOUNCERS**

1. Explain and consistently reinforce host school expectations for spectators.
2. Remain enthusiastic but not show favoritism while making announcements, and never publicly question or criticize the players, coaches, or officials.
3. Encourage respect for the National Anthem and remind spectators to remove caps and stand.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF COACHES**

1. Exemplify high moral character, behavior and leadership, lead by example, and set a standard for players and spectators to follow both on and off the athletic arena.
2. Teach players the rules of the game and to respect the game, and take action when athletes exhibit poor sportsmanship.
3. Teach students to respect their opponents and not demonize their opponents.
4. Adhere to the CIAC guidelines for coach/official communication.
5. Be aware of the competitive balance of contests and manage the score in a manner that is sportsmanlike and respectful of opponents.
6. Teach players about personal responsibility and character using teachable moments.
7. Prepare your team for adverse and emotional situations that come up during their sport and how players should conduct themselves during those moments.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF ATHLETES**

1. Accept the responsibility and privilege the student-athlete has in representing their school and community by learning and showing teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline in all aspects of the game.
2. Conduct themselves responsibly during adverse or emotional situations.
3. Demonstrate respect for self, coach, teammates, opponents, officials and spectators by exhibiting good character and conducting themselves as a positive role model.
4. Win and lose graciously.
5. Cheer for your team, not against your opponent.
6. Congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat.
7. Refrain from taunting opponents.

**CLASS ACT COUNCILS**

1. Hold scheduled meetings.
2. Work with the Athletic Director and Principal to promote sportsmanship standards at your school.
3. When necessary, work to resolve sportsmanship issues at home contests and between your school and opponents.
4. Work to encourage parents and spectators to be accountable for their behaviors at athletics events.
5. Class Act councils frequently create programs and special events that support sportsmanship.
6. Consider fostering initiatives beyond athletics that create good will in your community.
7. Consider working with captains to coordinate sportsmanship at your school.

**STEPS TO FORM A CLASS ACT COUNCIL\***

1. The administration or athletic director should identify a core group of student leaders to form the Class Act Council. (Schools can contact the CIAC for support in forming their Class Act Council.)
2. The administration or athlete director will meet with these students and brainstorm ideas for the formation of the Class Act Council.
3. The brainstorming or formation meeting can result in, but are not limited to the following\*\*:

* Which student athletes will be members of the Class Act Council and how will they be selected.
* The number of students you want on your Class Act Council.
* How often will the Class Act Council meet?
* Determine who will take part in developing an agenda for each meeting.
* What will be the mission statement and the initial goals of this council.

1. Have a system for getting younger students involved as leaders. (Solicit coaches recommendations.)

\* It is not necessary to use the title “Class Act Council” at your school. You can use a title that fits your school. Call it a club.

\*\*Class Act Councils can take on other initiatives related to community service.

Class Act Revision Committee

Allison Borawski, Director of Athletics, Bloomfield High School

Jim Buonocore, Director of Athletics, Ledyard High School

Diane Calas, Director of Athletics, Bulkeley High School

Frank Cordona, Director of Athletics, Portland High School

Ernie Goodwin, Director of Athletics, Amity Regional High School

Kim Hirth, Director of Athletics, Canton High School

Anne MacNeil, Director of Athletics, Housatonic Valley Regional High School

Mike McKenna, Director of Athletics, Torrington High School

Mark Ottusch, Director of Athletics, New Fairfield High School

Matt Perachi, Director of Athletics, Shepaug Valley High School

Ray Tanguay, Director of Athletics, Oliver Wolcott Technical High School

Dave Schulz, FCIAC League Commissioner

Jen Stone, Assistant Director of Athletics, Naugatuck High School

Jon Winer, Director of Athletics, CREC Magnet Schools

Henry Rondon, CIAC Executive Staff

Joe Velardi, CIAC Executive Staff