

EVALUATION, TERMINATION AND NON-RENEWAL OF ATHLETIC COACHES

It is the policy of the Rocky Hill Board of Education (the “Board”) that an athletic coach employed by the Board shall:

1. Adhere to all Board policies, rules and regulations;
2. Conduct himself or herself in a professional manner;
3. Serve as a role model for students; and
4. Demonstrate competence and proficiency in his or her role as an athletic coach of a particular sport.

For purposes of this policy, the term “**athletic coach**” means any person holding (and required to hold) a coaching permit issued by the Connecticut State Board of Education who is hired by the Board to act as a coach for a sport season. The term “athletic coach” under this policy shall include coaches who have direct responsibility for one or more teams.

For purposes of this policy, the term “athletic director” means an individual responsible for administering the athletic program of a school or school district under the jurisdiction of the Board, and who is responsible for the supervision of athletic coaches.

The Superintendent may adopt administrative regulations in accordance with this policy.

I. Evaluations

Pursuant to state law, the Board requires that an athletic coach employed by the Board be evaluated on an annual basis by the athletic director or the coach’s immediate supervisor. An athletic coach shall be provided with a copy of any such evaluation. Other assistant and volunteer coaches may be evaluated as directed by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

II. Employment of an Athletic Coach

- A. Athletic coaches serve at the discretion of the Superintendent, and their employment in their specific coaching positions (*e.g.*, basketball, golf) may be non-renewed or terminated at any time, subject to the provisions set forth below which apply to athletic coaches who have served in the same coaching position for three or more consecutive years.
- B. If the Superintendent non-renews or terminates the coaching contract of an athletic coach who has served in the same coaching position for three or more consecutive school years, the Superintendent shall inform such coach of the decision within ninety (90) calendar days of the end of the athletic season covered by the contract. In such cases, the athletic coach will have an opportunity to appeal the decision of the Superintendent in accordance with the procedures set forth below in Section III.
- C. Notwithstanding any rights an athletic coach may have to a hearing, nothing prohibits a Superintendent from terminating the employment contract of any athletic coach at any time, including an athletic coach who has served in the same coaching position for three or more consecutive school years:

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1. For reasons of moral misconduct, insubordination, failure to comply with the Board’s policies, rules and regulations; or
 2. Because the sport has been canceled by the Board.
- D. If a decision to terminate a coach’s employment is made during the athletic season, the Superintendent shall remove the coach from duty during the pendency of any hearing conducted pursuant to this policy.

III. Hearing Procedures

An athletic coach who has served in the same coaching position for three or more consecutive school years may appeal any such non-renewal or termination decision (except if such decision was due to cancellation of the sport) to the Board in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. The athletic coach must file a written appeal with the Board within ten (10) calendar days of the Superintendent’s written notification of non-renewal or termination. Such appeal shall set forth the basis on which the athletic coach seeks review of that decision, and a copy of said appeal shall be sent to the Superintendent. Failure to submit a timely written appeal shall constitute a waiver of said appeal opportunity.
- B. Within a reasonable period of time of its receipt of a written appeal of the Superintendent’s decision, the Board or a committee of the Board as designated by the Chairperson shall conduct a hearing to consider such appeal. Reasonable notice of the time and place for such hearing shall be issued to the athletic coach prior to the commencement of the hearing.
- C. At the hearing, the athletic coach shall have an opportunity to present facts and evidence in support of renewal and/or reinstatement, and the Superintendent shall have the opportunity (but shall not be obligated) to present facts and evidence in support of the decision of non-renewal and/or termination. For good cause shown, the athletic coach may call a limited number of witnesses to testify if there is a clear need for witnesses to present factual information (rather than simply expressing an opinion on the skill or competence of the athletic coach). In any event, cumulative or redundant testimony shall not be allowed.
- D. The decision of non-renewal or termination shall be affirmed unless the Board determines that the decision is arbitrary and capricious. The coach shall bear the burden of proof on this point.
- E. Within a reasonable period of time following the hearing, the Board shall determine whether the Superintendent acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner in making his/her decision not to renew and/or to terminate, and shall provide a written decision to the coach. The decision of the Board shall be final.

IV. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Rocky Hill Athletic Coaches

Rocky Hill High School and Griswold Middle School athletics are educationally-based programs. The function of a coach is to teach attitudes, proper habits, and knowledge and skills. The athletic program is designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success.

Each student-athlete should be treated as an individual whose welfare shall be primary at all times. The coach must be aware that he or she serves as an important role model in the education of student-athletes; therefore, he or she shall never place winning above the value of character building.

The coach must constantly uphold the educational standards of the Rocky Hill Public Schools. In all personal contact with student-athletes, officials, the athletic director, school administrators, state high school and middle school associations, the media, parents, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical conduct. **Failure to uphold the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.**

The Code requires that each coach shall:

1. Support and enforce school rules for the prevention of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and under no circumstances shall authorize the use of these substances.
2. Never engage in the use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs while supervising athletes in a school-sponsored event.
3. Promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.
4. Be thoroughly acquainted with contest, state, league, and local rules and be responsible for their interpretation to team members. The coach shall abide by the letter and spirit of these rules at all times.
5. Actively use his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, and work closely with cheerleaders, administrators, and boosters where appropriate.
6. Show respect to game officials, and refrain from conduct which will incite players or spectators against officials, against teammates, or against the opponents. Public criticism of officials, players, or coaches on either team will not be tolerated.
7. Not use social media as a platform to discuss any matters related to a Rocky Hill team or game for which the coach is responsible, other than to post a result.

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8. Use a district-approved, common media platform application such as *Group Me* or *Remind* to communicate team information to the student-athletes and their parents. Coaches shall be responsible for ensuring that each athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall receive all messages distributed to team members. Coaches shall not be permitted under any circumstances to text students (as a group or individually) using the coach's personal or district-issued cell phone number. Coaches' personal or district-issued cell phone numbers shall never be shared with student-athletes.
9. Refrain from the use of vulgarity.
10. Never conduct a one-on-one workout with a student-athlete.
11. Not exert pressure on faculty members to give special consideration to student-athletes.
12. Strictly adhere to the scouting regulations adopted by the state and league associations.
13. Meet with opposing coaches prior to, and immediately, after each contest to set the correct tone for good sportsmanship.
14. Provide all assistants and volunteers the "Code of Ethics" (Section IV of this policy) prior to the sport season and be responsible for adherence to the policy by his/her staff.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222e Policy on evaluation and termination of athletic coaches.

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-149d Athletic directors, Definitions, Qualifications and hiring. Duties.