

**Mercer Island School District**

**WATER POLO**

**SAFETY GUIDELINES**

**(Prior to participating, both the student and parent must read carefully and sign)**

When a person is involved in any athletic activity, an injury can occur especially in a very physically demanding sport like WATER POLO. One should be aware the information presented in these safety guidelines is to inform the athlete of proper techniques and inherent dangers involved with water polo. There is a chance of broken bones, muscle, soft tissue and back injuries, which could lead to some form of paralysis and even death. Not all potential injury possibilities in this sport are listed, but athletes should be aware that fundamentals, coaching and proper safety equipment are important to the safety and enjoyment of the sport.

1. Proper warm-up is essential before strenuous activity takes place. Be aware of the potentially serious injuries if you do not follow correct procedures in stretching, and conditioning.
2. Water polo is a very strenuous sport requiring strength, flexibility and endurance. Proper conditioning for turnouts, scrimmages, matches and tournaments is essential and requires a progressive improvement in conditioning as the participation time and level of competition increases.
3. If you wear eyeglasses, contact the coach for proper fitting of safety lenses, appropriate frames that are compatible with water polo. If you have a bi or tri-focal lens, contact your doctor to provide the best len(s) combination for water polo. Contact lens may be an option for some water polo participants.
4. Swim goggles are recommended for all swimmers if eye protection is needed.
5. Earplugs are recommended especially if the athlete has a prior history of ear infections. Checking with your coach and family physician will clarify if earplugs are mandatory for your event(s).
6. Perform only those skills and techniques as instructed and/or supervised by your coach.
7. Do not perform any illegal or unsafe holds, movements or techniques to other players.
8. Be sure all equipment is fitting properly before each day's activity. All headgear should be snug and securely fastened prior to entry into the pool. All headgear should have the appropriate number affixed to the outer surface as required for competition.
9. Travel to and from off-campus facilities and practice/competition sites must be in accordance with school procedures.
10. Remove all jewelry and metal hair fasteners and other body adornments as required by rules and regulations for water polo.
11. Be aware of your surroundings both home and away including but not limited to surface conditions, obstructions in the proximity to the swimming pool, depth of pool and diving area, location of ladders, location of life saving equipment, location of bulkheads and safe entrance/egress to/from the aquatic center. Prior to entering the pool make sure all removable ladders and lane markers have been removed from the pool. If possible, all diving boards and over hanging obstructions should be removed from the pool prior to the start of practice or competition.
12. When not in the pool, wear outer and under garments appropriate for humidity and temperature.
13. In order to help protect the safety of all squad members, squad members with physically limiting injuries and/or health conditions must inform the coach prior to each day's activity of limiting conditions and participate only to the extent allowed by the coach.
14. Swimmers should hydrate themselves frequently during practice and games and follow the coach's direction on hydration prior to and following practices, games and tournaments.
15. Notify the coach immediately if injured.
16. Never try to pull an injured swimmer from the pool. If you think the swimmer has a neck, head or back injury, support him/her in the water and wait for a trained lifeguard to remove him/her using the appropriate apparatus and procedures.
17. Practice only when your coach is present.
18. No running on swimming pool decks.
19. Never swim alone and never enter the water without a coach or lifeguard ready for you to start your activity.
20. When doing conditioning lap swims &/or sprints and multiple swimmers are swimming in one lane, always swim to the right side of the lane.
21. Dive into the pool only when the depth is appropriate and safe. Feet first entry is always safer.
22. At the conclusion of each practice or match, replace all equipment in the proper storage area and secure all items as directed by your coach or aquatic center administrator.
23. Report to the coach any damage or dangerous condition in the pool, pool area, or locker room.

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The above information has been explained to me and I understand the list of rules, safety regulations/warnings and procedures. I also understand the necessity of using the proper techniques while participating in the **Water Polo Program**.

\_\_\_\_\_   
Date

\_\_\_\_\_   
Athlete's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_   
Date

\_\_\_\_\_   
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Mercer Island School District

**WATER POLO**  
**WARNING/AGREEMENT TO OBEY INSTRUCTIONS**

**(Prior to participating, both the student  
and parent must read carefully and sign)**

I am aware that WATER POLO is a high-risk sport and that practicing or competing in water polo will be a dangerous activity involving **MANY RISKS OF INJURY**. I understand the dangers and risks of practicing and competing in water polo include but are not limited to, death, serious neck and spinal injuries which may result in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage, serious injury to virtually all internal organs, serious injury to virtually all bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, tendons and other aspects of the muscular skeletal system, and serious injury or impairment to other aspects of my body, general health and well being. I understand that the dangers and risks of practicing or competing in water polo may result not only in serious injury, but in a serious impairment of my future abilities to earn a living, to engage in other business, social and recreational activities and generally to enjoy life. I also understand that the sport in which I participate may be so inherently dangerous that no amount of reasonable supervision, protective equipment or training can eliminate all vestiges of danger. I am informed the District does not assume the responsibility for the medical services required for these risks.

Because of the dangers of WATER POLO, I recognize the importance of following the coaches' instructions regarding techniques, training and other team rules, etc., and to agree to obey such instructions.

In consideration of the Mercer Island School District permitting me to try out for the **Mercer Island High School Water Polo Team** and to engage in all activities related to the team, including but not limited to trying out, practicing or competing in water polo. I have read the above warnings and I understand their terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Athlete

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_.

In consideration of the Mercer Island School District permitting my child/ward to try out for the **Mercer Island High School Water Polo Team** and to engage in all activities related to the team, including, but not limited to, trying out, practicing or competing in water polo, I have read the above warning and I understand their terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian