

**1.0 Opportunities**

1. Opportunities for athletic participation in the past have included:
2. (Through the Middle School Sports League, [themssl.weebly.org](http://themssl.weebly.org)):
  3. Coed Volleyball at 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels (Fall)
  4. Cross-country running at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels (Fall, 3-4 meets)
  5. Boys' basketball at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels (October - January)
  6. Girls' Basketball at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels (January – mid-April)
  7. 6<sup>th</sup> grade Boys' and Girls' instructional league Basketball (April-May)

**2.0 School-determined Eligibility**

1. All 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are eligible to participate in our middle school's athletic program. 5<sup>th</sup> graders are permitted to run in Cross-Country. From time to time, students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade may be offered other opportunities, the circumstances for which the Athletic Director will decide.
2. Students must maintain “good academic standing” as per district requirement. “Good academic standing” is defined by the class teacher in consultation with other teachers and the education director, and includes all academic subject areas.
3. Prospective players present a form to the class teachers for signature and comments regarding their “good academic standing” status. It is the student's responsibility to maintain this, and the teacher's to notify the Athletic Director and Education Director of a student in jeopardy of losing, or having lost such status. A roster will be compiled and sent to each class teacher.
4. All student athletes wishing to play in a contest must have attended school, fully or in-part, on the day of the contest. A student who misses a full school day is ineligible for any game on that school day.
5. Athletes are required to have health insurance in order to play, and must disclose that information to the school.

**3.0 Criteria for play time**

1. All student athletes wishing to play in a contest must have attended school, fully or in-part, on the day of the contest.
2. Play time for athletes in the contest is largely determined by league rules, which vary by sport. Second, discretion on the part of the coach is exercised, in consultation with the athletic director, when possible (see Area 8.0 Discretion).

**4.0 Criteria for play in MSSL Volleyball (from the rulebook)**

1. Schools are allowed to field 2 teams, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade
2. Players may play up to field a team, but not down a grade. If a team plays down a grade, the team will forfeit, but the match can still be played.

3. All eligible, dressed players must play in a match
4. If a player does not start the first game, he/she must start the second match
5. Coaches must rotate all players in within a match in the same order as determined at the start of the match. If a player is injured and removed from the court, the player returns in their same rotation spot.

#### 5.0 **Criteria for Cross-Country (SunRidge students)**

1. All students may participate at their grade level if they are eligible (see 2.0)

#### 6.0 **Criteria for Boys' and Girls' MSSL basketball (from the MSSL rulebook)**

1. Boys' and Girls' basketball will consist of a maximum of two teams per school grade – 7 and 8. No more than one team per level is allowed.
2. Players are allowed to, “play up” a grade level to fill vacancies, but may not “play down” a grade.
3. A player may play both at grade level and above in the same day.
4. 8<sup>th</sup> graders have play priority on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team, as do 7<sup>th</sup> graders on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team. 6<sup>th</sup> graders will play on the 7<sup>th</sup> and/or 8<sup>th</sup>; or if there are 12 or more players on those teams, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders will either have to wait until 7<sup>th</sup> grade or participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade instructional league, if they can get enough players to do so.
5. All team members must attend the school they will compete for; an exception may be made such as when a few athletes, who would otherwise have no play opportunity, join another school’s team by mutual school agreement.
6. In case of a home school situation, a player may play for his or her school as long as it falls under the rules of attendance.

#### 7.0 **Criteria for MSSL 6<sup>th</sup> grade instructional league (from MSSL rulebook)**

1. All team members must attend the school they will compete for, unless some exception has been made (such as when a few athletes, who would otherwise have no play opportunity, join another school’s team by mutual agreement.)
2. In case of a home school situation, a player may play for his or her school as long as it falls under the rules of attendance.

#### 8.0 **Criteria for coed, mixed-grade soccer league (at Summerfield)**

Unknown at this time

#### 9.0 **Discretion**

1. When no other league rule is governing amount of play time, discretion is exercised by the coach, in consultation with athletic director (when possible), with the following criteria in mind;
2. 8th grade - these students only have this season left before graduating, whereas 7th and 6th grades will have one more and two more seasons to play, respectively. This becomes a huge factor if we have only one team, and hardly a factor at all if we have two.

3. Practice attendance, and how hard the player worked and listened in practice
4. Degree of injury or illness on a player's behalf
5. Concerns about "good academic standing" status being in jeopardy
6. If a player presents an unsafe risk to other players;
7. Following the stated philosophy of the league (see **10.0 Philosophy of MSSL**)
8. Fielding a competitive team at the grade level so that each game is not a 40+ point loss, which is forgettable once, but defeating if a regular occurrence. Kids need to feel some success to continue.
9. This list is not exhaustive and may include other intangible discretionary points (lack of player sleep, general safety awareness, player disability, etc.)

#### **10.0 Philosophy of the MSSL as stated**

1. The Middle School Sports League rulebook states that each player suited up in team area plays at least once each half.
2. Any player who is present and in uniform is considered eligible to play.
3. Each player on the bench must play in both halves of the game. If a player who is on the bench does not play in each half of the contest, the offending team will receive a forfeit.
4. The Participation rule is enacted as a minimum requirement. It is expected that every school will set a policy which exceeds the minimum standard for participation. The philosophy of the league is to play all members of a team as much as possible. Winning is important, but not at the cost of any team member being excluded the opportunity to experience game play.
5. Fan code of conduct – At no time during the contest will any spectator touch any player. Spectators will refrain from vulgarity, harassment and unsportsman-like conduct. A warning may be given before future action; if, however, behavior is initially too egregious (as determined by coaches and/or referees), an ejection may occur, and future attendance at league games is in jeopardy depending on the behavior. If a parent was ejected, this information needs to be reported to the MSSL officers.

#### **11.0 Comments from the Athletic Director's Experiences**

1. While those are the league "Rules and regulations", unfortunately it allows all schools to vary on how they attempt to follow the philosophy. I've witnessed lack of policy first-hand on many occasions, and doubt there are official policies, as expected by the MSSL, at schools (volleyball is a different animal completely).
2. CYO does basketball differently, for sure. They have a larger pool of players, sort players according to ability, and then enforce a minutes-played rule. Our league simply can't be run in the same manner, we don't have a central tryout, we play for our school, we have a varying degree of skill, etc.