Maury River Middle School



“Eagle Pride”

2025-2026

Athletic Department Handbook

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Mission Statement

Maury River Middle School provides a wide variety of competitive sports for all students. We strive to instill in our student-athlete a spirit of good sportsmanship and success allowing students to build pride and character while enhancing their mental and physical abilities.

Philosophy

Maury River Middle School places academics as the highest priority and expands the overall quality of the educational experience by integrating the athletic programs and their objectives with academic and developmental activities.

The stronger the link is between our athletics programs and our academic programs – the more those athletics experiences are incorporated into the academic experiences – then we don't have to talk about athletics and academics as separate entities but as part of the whole academic experience.

Maury River Middle School has established a goal of teaching students to be responsible citizens by providing them with opportunities that help develop character, critical thinking skills, sociability, and specific mental and physical skills. It is imperative that all activities carried out under the sponsorship of the school be viewed in terms of their potential contribution to the school's overall goals for young people. It is through our activity programs that students may learn respect for self and others, teamwork, loyalty, compassion, tolerance, courtesy, fairness, integrity, discipline, courage, responsibility, ethics, and pride while maintaining a high level of competitiveness in practice and games.

We wish to encourage as many students as possible to take part in athletic activities, following the philosophy that students will miss a valuable part of their education if they do not participate.

Virginia High School League Code of Ethics

Encourage and promote friendly and good sportsmanship throughout the school by requiring courtesy and proper decorum at all times.

Insist on compliance with all rules and regulations of the VHSL.

Coaches Shall Observe The Following Regulations

1. Coaches should have quality supervision at all times to ensure the safety and welfare of our student athletes.
2. While our student athletes are under the supervision of our coaches, the coaches shall behave in a manner that is appropriate (ex. No use of drugs or alcohol and no use of tobacco products).
3. Any act or behavior that is deemed inappropriate or unacceptable by the Athletic Director or Principal may result in a reprimand or even immediate dismissal from coaching at MRMS.

The coach will instill that the athlete shall:

1. Be courteous to visiting teams and officials.
2. Play hard and to the limit of his/her ability, regardless of discouragement. The true athlete does not give up nor does him/her quarrel, cheat, bet, or grandstand.
3. Retain his/her composure at all times and never leave the bench or enter the playing field/court to engage in a fight.
4. Be modest when successful and be gracious in defeat. A true sportsman does not offer excuses for failure.
5. Maintain a high degree of physical fitness by observing team-training rules conscientiously.
6. Demonstrate loyalty by maintaining satisfactory scholastic standing and by participating in or supporting other school activities.
7. Play for the love of the game.
8. Understand and observe the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
9. Set a high standard of personal cleanliness.
10. Respect the integrity and judgment of officials and accept their decisions without questions.
11. Respect the facilities of host schools and the trust entailed in being a guest.

Athletic Department Chain of Command

Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director – Insurance, college recruiters, promotions, publicity, rule interpretation, school board rules, team travel, transportation, and VHSL.

Athletic Trainer – Medical clearance, nutrition, hydration, and training room rules.

Head Coach – Locker room, uniforms, equipment, student issues, athletic issues. Parents and athletes are encouraged to consult the coach with their concerns.

*** *Please become familiar with the VHSL off-season practice guidelines*.**

Athletes Shall Observe The Following Regulations

Bona Fide Student Rule

The student-athlete shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing at Maury River MS/Rockbridge County HS. The administration will determine the parameters of being in good standing.

School Attendance of Athletes

The student must adhere to all attendance policies set by the school and by the Rockbridge County School Board.

An athlete must be in attendance in accordance with his class schedule on the day of the contest or practice to be eligible to participate that day. A student who is tardy to school, absent all day for illness, or who checks out during the day for any reason will not be allowed to practice or play. The only exceptions to this rule are medical appointments, court appearances, attending a funeral, or early dismissal for a contest. The Athletic Director must approve exceptions.

Appearance and Behavior

All athletes are to obey the school dress code. On game days, athletes must dress appropriately and in a manner that reflects positively on the team. When attending end-of-the-season banquets and awards functions, team members are required to dress appropriately. All athletes are representatives of MRMS and are expected to exercise good judgment and follow the directions of the coaches at all times.

Care of Equipment and School Property

Each player is responsible for taking care of his/her equipment and school property. Any equipment lost or damaged by neglect on the part of the player will be replaced at the expense of the player. Vandalism and destruction of school property will lead to dismissal from the squad. Without the permission of the head coach, players are not to take uniforms home for cleaning. All equipment must be returned to the head coach three days after the end of the season. Replacement costs for damaged or lost items will be the responsibility of the athlete.

In-and-Off-Season Participation, Workouts, and Strength Training.

Athletes are only permitted to participate in one (1) in-season sport per season. An athlete will **not** be expected, required, nor permitted to participate in any off-season activities in a sport while participating in-season with another sport. This does not include weight training classes during the school day. It is expected that team coaches and strength training coaches will work together to ensure proper in-and-off season workouts as well as game-day expectations or limitations.

All teams are allowed a maximum of 4 total off-season workouts per week. No more than 3 of those days can be an on-the-field practice. Ex: 2 days of on-the-field practice and 2 days of weight room/conditioning workouts.

Quit or Dismissed From Team

Any athlete who gains membership on any MRMS/RCHS team is expected to remain until the season's completion unless adverse conditions prevail. An athlete who quits or is dismissed from a team may not participate with another team (either in season or during "open" gyms) within the same sport season without permission from all coaches involved.

Game Transportation

All team members are required to ride the team bus to away games. The Head Coach and/or MRMS/RCHS recognized assistant coach must be present on the team bus at all times during travel to and from away games so long as student/athletes are present on the bus. An athlete wishing to ride home with another adult other than their parent must have on file a signed and approved (by the athletic director) **Special Request for Student to Ride with another Adult Form**. This form is available in the athletic office and located on the athletic website under files/links.

Athletic Department Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary actions can be viewed in the MRMS Student/Parent Handbook. The four levels of disciplinary actions will take precedence over the rules established by the head coach.

In School Suspension (ISS)

At the discretion of the coach, the student-athlete may participate in practice but must complete disciplinary action of the team make-up policy for unexcused practice for each day of ISS.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Students suspended from school are not allowed on school property, and therefore, may not practice or participate in a scheduled contest during the suspension or days in OSS. The student-athlete will be responsible for completing the team make-up policy for unexcused practice for each day of OSS.

After School Detention (ASD)

Students required to serve after-school detention may not practice or participate in a scheduled contest during the suspension. The student-athlete will be responsible for completing the team make-up policy for unexcused practice for each day of ASD.

Possession of Tobacco

- Any pupil using or possessing any tobacco product (cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, etc.) while on MRMS/RCHS property from the time of arrival until departure, including school buses, will be disciplined as follows:

1st offense – Suspended from play for a period equivalent to that number of contests representing 20 percent of the total number of VHSL contest limitations for each sport to be played during the regular season.

2nd offense - Suspended from play for a period equivalent to that number of contests representing 40 percent of the total number of VHSL contest limitations for each sport to be played during the regular season.

3rd offense - Dismissal from the team.

Possession of Alcohol, Drugs & Inhalants

ALCOHOL, DRUGS & INHALANTS
The following Rockbridge County School Board Policy will be followed:

Any pupil who, while on school property, is apprehended using drugs, alcohol, or inhalants or has either in his/her possession or causes either to be brought on school property, could be suspended from school for 6-10 days, with a possibility of the recommendation to the Superintendent for EXPULSION of the student. Athletes shall be subject to the Rockbridge County High School Code of Conduct.

STUDENT/ATHLETE SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Student-athletes are athletes all year and are responsible for their actions 365 days a year.

Definitions:

Student/Athlete –Any 7th-12th grader established as an athlete at the middle school, junior varsity or varsity level. An established athlete is one who is on a middle school roster or high school Master Eligibility List (MEL) until the next roster or MEL for that sport.

Off School Premises –Applies to non-school hours and non-school events.

Regular Season –The scheduled number of contests for a sport season exclusive of scrimmages and post-season play.

Rockbridge County Schools Athletic Department Contract

Refusal by the student/athlete or the parent/guardian (s) to participate in the Rockbridge County Schools Athletic Department Contract will preclude the student/athlete's further participation in athletics at the school.

First Violation:

When the principal or his/her designee confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following will take place.

1. The student/athlete shall be suspended from play for a period equivalent to that number of contests representing 20 percent of the total number of VHSL contest limitations for each sport to be played during the regular season. (Any fraction of the calculation will be dropped.) The penalty will be applied to the immediate next contest(s) including playoffs, and/or to the next sport season in which the student-athlete participates within 365 calendar days. During the suspension period, the student will be able to attend practices and contests; however, the student will not be permitted to dress in team uniform for contests. This does not apply to out-of-school suspension days as a result of School Board Policy.

Second Violation:
When the principal or his/her designee confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following will take place.

1. A second violation occurring within the same school year, even if in another sport or activity, will permanently exclude the student from all athletic activities for the remainder of the school year. (If less than 20 percent of the total number of VHSL contest limitations scheduled to be played during the regular season remains, the suspension will carry over to the next sport season in which the student participates.)

2. A second violation occurring in a separate school year from the first violation will require the student/athlete to be suspended from play for a period equivalent to 20 percent of the total number of VHSL contest limitations for each sport to be played during the regular season. (Any fraction of the calculation will be dropped.) The penalty will be applied to the immediate next contest(s) including playoffs, and/or to the next sports season in which the student-athlete participates within the current school year. During the suspension period, the student will be able to attend practices and contests; however, the student will not be permitted to dress in team uniform for contests or competitive events. This does not apply to out-of-school suspension days as a result of school board policy.

Third Violation:
When the principal or his/her designee confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following will take place.

1. A student/athlete who is found responsible for third violation during their VHSL eligibility is ineligible to participate in all athletic activities for 12 consecutive months from the date of suspension.

Absences from Practice
Three (3) unexcused practices = dismissal from team

Violations Outside of School

The principals and athletic director will determine actions to be taken.

"Remember that you represent MRMS/RCHS and your team both on campus and in the community!"

Please Note:

Coaches have the right to determine excused or unexcused practices as outlined in each teams set of rules. Athletes should receive a copy of these rules at the beginning of the season. Athletes must contact you in person to determine whether a practice they plan to miss is excused or unexcused. Athlete participation and commitment to the practice and game schedules are required and expected by your administration

The disciplinary actions in this Handbook reflect the high expectation of the Athletic Department regarding participation in athletics. It is by no means comprehensive. We rely on the judgment of you-the coaches, student/athletes, and parent/guardian to work together to resolve discipline issues whether in school or with their team. The administration may also participate in resolving any of these issues. We firmly believe that effective communication as well as student and parental support are key elements in the success of our student/athletes and the athletic programs. Please feel free to contact the athletic department and/or administration if you have any questions or concerns.

Other Items:

<u>Fundraising Procedures:</u>

All fundraising requests must be submitted at least 2 months in advance.

If MRMS Students are used for fundraising purposes that represents their sports season, all funds must be submitted to the MRMS Bookkeeper.

MRMS is not a "Club" and will not coordinate with clubs that fundraise to represent a sport at MRMS.

Teams are encouraged to fundraise if they wish to purchase additional items for players, since there will be no personal team packages for players to buy.

*What the player is instructed in practice and performed on the field is what determines the chance of success, it does not come by what uniforms or accessories they have or what the coach thinks they need in appearance!

<u>Team budgets</u>

Will be determined by the MRMS Administration. Head Coaches will informed of the yearly amount allotted for their sport.

Volunteer and Paid Assistants

Any applicant(s) must be approved by the Athletic Director, Central Office and Rockbridge County School Board after the proper paper work has been submitted. NO EXCEPTION

Any potential Candidate for a volunteer or paid assistant must be 21 or out of high school for 3 years of the graduation date.

Former players are not allowed to participate in practices or be on the sideline of games unless they have been approved by the Administration and fall under the criteria of the procedures of a volunteer or paid assistant.

Sportsmanship Statement

The Middle School Athletics, VHSL District, Region and State Class 1-6 promotes good sportsmanship by students-athletes, coaches and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Profanity, racial or sexist comments or other intimidating actions directed at the officials, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated and are grounds for removal from the site of competition. We would also like to remind you that all VHSL District, Region and State Class 1-6 Schools are drug-free zones. Smoking or other use of tobacco products and alcohol is prohibited on school grounds and individuals in violation could be banned from future events at all VHSL sites.

On and Off the Field. Play hard, Play clean! No exceptions! Respect for yourself, teammates, officials and opponents should be something that stands out for all to see. Individual and selfish behavior will not be tolerated and you will lose your opportunity to play.

Athletes are role models…set the example of proper conduct during the school day

Yell in Support of Our Team, not at Officials, other teams, coaches, or other fans.

Administrator/Designee or Athletic Director on site to provide support of:

<u>Spectators</u>: Any form of a sportsmanship violation determined by an administrator whether at a home or away site in accordance with the VHSL, Valley District and National Conference policy will be handled immediately. Consequences will be determined by the severity of the situation. Ex. 1st offense, a 2 game suspension for the next 2 games whether it is a home or away site. 2nd offense, suspended for the season/remainder of the school year from attending VHSL sponsored events whether it is a home or away site. The VHSL, Central Office and the MRMS/RCHS School Resource Officer will be notified of any such behavior and disciplinary actions.

- **Just because some other player(s) or fans from another school, act inappropriately does not justify a MRMS Eagle/RCHS Wildcat player or fan acting the same. We will not tolerate inappropriate behavior.**

Thank you for your support of these policies.

"Eagle/Wildcat Pride" means reaching new levels of success through academics and athletics





April 16, 2019