

Student-Athlete and Parent Handbook

Athletic Policies and Expectations

2025-2026



*Updated 6-2-2025

The following policies and expectations are for the promotion and support of Merrol Hyde Athletics. Merrol Hyde Magnet School is an academic magnet school with a focus on college preparation, rigorous coursework, accelerated pace, and the Paideia philosophy of developing a well-rounded student and citizen.

These policies originate at the school and administration level. Each sport is encouraged to develop team level expectations for student-athletes and parents.

Before an athlete will be officially rostered with TSSAA or TMSAA, this handbook must be signed (digitally on Final Forms).

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- Preparticipation physical information can be found on the school website. Physicals will be uploaded by families to their Final Forms account and all pages will be signed electronically.
- Grade Reinstatement Form (this will be distributed as needed for those that fail to meet academic requirements)
- Signature Page: Page 6-must be signed on Final Forms PRIOR to participation

All students at MHMS, starting in 7th grade, are required to participate in a competitive school sport. In individual circumstances, substitutions *may* be approved by the administration. As a general rule, if MHMS offers the student-athlete's choice of sports, the student is expected to try to participate for the school team. Each coach sets his/her own expectations for what constitutes participation for their sport. If a student fails to satisfy the sports requirement, that student must participate in another sport during the same school year. If that student fails to participate in a sport for the entire school year, the student will be referred to MHMS administration for further steps.

All students and families are expected to support the ABC (Athletic Booster Club). The ABC supports each athletic program financially and structurally each year. The ABC organizes fundraisers throughout the year, and sports and families will be asked to help plan, participate, and volunteer for these events.

Academic Eligibility: Academic excellence is expected and will be promoted at all times. Students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress are subject to ineligibility, suspension, and dismissal from the team. Every effort will be made by administration, coaches, and teachers to promote academic success. Athletes' grades are monitored regularly by the athletic director and administration. The following procedures will take place when there is a concern or grade below expectations.

- Athletes' grades are monitored regularly by the athletic director and administration. Any time an athlete's grade is below a 70% in Skyward, that athlete is ineligible to participate in a game or scrimmage. The athlete may still attend practice according to team guidelines, but he/she may not dress or participate in competition. The athlete may be immediately reinstated when the grade has improved and been verified by teacher signature and administrative approval.
- Report Cards: An athlete with a quarter grade below a 60% will be ineligible for the entire next nine weeks. The athlete may not attend practices, games, or team functions without written permission from administration. An athlete who does not show progress towards academic improvement is in jeopardy of not meeting the sports requirement due to not completing the season. The student is placed on academic probation according to school policy. An athlete with a quarter grade below a 70% is ineligible to participate in a game or scrimmage. The athlete may still attend practice according to team guidelines, but he/she may not dress or participate in competition. The athlete may be reinstated when the overall grade has improved to a minimum 70% semester average (without any added rigor points), the student has shown progress towards academic improvement as verified by their teacher, and reinstatement has been finalized by teacher signature and administrative approval.
- *It is not the priority of any teacher to expedite reinstatement.
- *The policies for academic eligibility apply to both middle and high school sanctioned sports.

Attendance: Athletes that are too ill to be at school are also too ill to practice or play in a contest. An athlete that leaves school early due to an illness is ineligible to practice, play, or travel with the team to an event that same day. An athlete must be signed in to school by 11:00 am in order to be eligible for participation that afternoon or evening in a practice or game. The principal and coach will communicate about extenuating circumstances and how they affect participation.

Conduct/Discipline: Student-athletes are held to the highest standard because they represent our school off campus, in the community, and across the region. All athletes are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner to support their teammates, coaches, programs, and the school, even during the off season. Athletes who behave in such a way that they receive ISS or OSS during school will also have an athletic consequence. This could range from temporary ineligibility for practices and/or games, up through dismissal from the team(s). Any athlete that is ejected from a game will serve additional game suspensions through the school. Any athlete cited for unsportsmanlike conduct during a game is subject to school level consequences as well. Athletes participating in a club sport that uses the likeness and/or name of MHMS is also subject to the above procedures.

Physical Requirements and other Documents: All athletes must have a current sports physical before participating in any sport or activity. The sports physical must be completed on the TSSAA/TMSSA forms and signed by a physician. For TSSAA purposes, all physicals must be dated April 15th or after to cover the student for the entire following school year. For example, a student that gets his/her physical on April 15th, 2025, would be covered for the entire 2025-2026 school year. Doctor notes are not acceptable. The physical is only one part of the MHMS required athletic documents. Creating a Final Forms account is necessary to electronically sign and upload any necessary documents. You can find the Final Forms information under the athletics tab on the school website. The athletic director will not enter athletes into the eligibility portal until all forms are completed with signatures.

Return to Play/Injury: Student health and safety is paramount and will be a top priority. Any athlete that is injured during a school practice or contest will need to follow up with school personnel for care. Athletes under the direct supervision of a medical doctor will need to communicate closely with the coaches to determine levels of participation during rehab or rest and to determine when the athlete can return to play. Any athlete showing signs or symptoms of a concussion, or who sustained a collision that could present such symptoms, will be held out of all participation at any level until evaluated by a medical doctor or the school athletic trainer. There are **no** exceptions to this rule.

Social Media: Athletes retain their right to free speech, including the use of social media. However, any athlete that uses social media inappropriately is subject to school and team level discipline, which could be at a different standard than other students. “Inappropriate use” includes, but is not limited to: posting taunts or ‘trash talk’ against an opponent; harassing or bullying remarks against another teammate or opponent; disparaging remarks against the school or coach; posting pictures of himself or herself appearing to use drugs, alcohol, or other prohibited substances; identity theft; inciting other students.

Substitution Sports: The goal of MHMS is to promote students to be well-rounded in mind, body, and spirit. To that end, all students 7th grade and higher must participate in a competitive sport. MHMS is not able to offer all sports at the school level. But in most cases, if MHMS offers the sport, a student may *not* receive permission to substitute that sport outside of the school, unless that athlete did not make the school team. As a guideline for athletes considering substitution, sports must have regular practices supervised by a competent coach, must engage in competition, and must have a culminating event, tournament, or performance. Substitutions will be handled on a case by case basis with the athletic director and administration.

Supporting the ABC: Since athletics are part of our school mission, MHMS sports teams and parents are expected to be involved in and support other school-wide events. Additionally, the ABC provides funding, support, and facilities maintenance for all athletic teams. Therefore, every athlete and family is expected to support the fundraising and volunteer events of ABC. These include the Hawk Heritage Golf tournament, the indoor soccer tournament, and the Hawk Walk and Run. Sports teams needing financial support of the ABC will need to have 100% membership from their athletes.

Team Policies and Expectations: Each coach is encouraged to develop specific team guidelines and policies to foster the success of his or her team. These policies will be given at the beginning of the season to each athlete and parent. Individual team policies may go above and beyond those contained in the school policy, provided they are communicated in advance, and they are designed to promote academic success, sportsmanship, and the well-being of the team.

Student-Athlete Name: _____

Sport: _____

I have read the school athletic policies, and I understand my expectations. I agree to abide by these policies, even in the off-season, and will make every effort to communicate with my coaches, teachers, and administrators in the event of any questions or concerns as to my participation.

Student-Athlete Signature: _____

I have read the school athletic policies, and I understand what is expected of my student. I agree to support the school and coaches referenced within these policies. I understand my commitment as a parent to promote academics, good citizenship, and to volunteer to support the school teams and ABC.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____