

Liberty Memorial Central Middle School



Athletics Handbook

Updated Fall 2025

This handbook has been designed to be a companion text to the Lawrence Public Schools USD 497 Athletic Handbook. While some overlap of essential policies exists, this text has been designed to provide clarity and consistency in building-level policies at Liberty Memorial Central Middle School.

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1. Who can play?

a. Offerings

- i. Lawrence Public Schools offers the following activities to 7th and 8th grade students:
 - Quarter 1: Cheer (coed), Cross Country (coed), Football (coed), Tennis (girls), and Volleyball (girls)
 - Quarter 2: Basketball (girls), Cheer (coed), and Wrestling (coed)
 - Quarter 3: Basketball (boys), Cheer (coed)
 - Quarter 4: Track & Field (coed), and Tennis (boys)

b. Paperwork

- i. In order to participate, students must have a completed athletic paperwork packet on file in the office by the first day of practice for each activity.
- ii. This packet includes the following:
 1. KSHSAA Pre-Participation Physical Form
 2. KSHSAA Eligibility Checklist
 3. LPS District Code of Conduct Policy
 4. KSHSAA Recommended Concussion & Head Injury Information Release Form
 5. LPS Athletic Insurance Compliance Form (must be notarized)

c. KSHSAA Academic Eligibility

- i. For students entering 7th grade there is no KSHSAA academic eligibility requirement.
- ii. Beginning the second semester of the seventh grade year, students who did not pass 5 classes pass five classes (D- or higher) at the end of the previous semester are not eligible to participate in athletics the following semester.
 1. Example: Phil only passed 3 classes during the spring semester of his seventh grade year. Phil IS NOT eligible for athletics during the fall semester of his eighth grade year.
- iii. See 4.a.ii. for information about in-season academic accountability.

d. Tryouts and Cuts

- i. Some athletic programs are “cut sports” due to high-popularity and limitations of availability based on facilities, staffing, uniforms, and equipment. Currently our cut sports are volleyball, girls basketball, and boys basketball.
- ii. For “cut” sports, a three-day tryout will be held to determine which student athletes will make the team. Coaches will update their ParentSquare student and caregiver contact lists to reflect their rosters, and will individually reach out to student-athletes that did not make the team and their caregivers through ParentSquare to communicate this news.

e. Merging Teams

- i. Guided by participation levels, staffing, and facilities, it may be deemed necessary for our sports programs to combine with other USD 497 middle schools (“Merging”).
- ii. When merging is deemed necessary, the school with the larger number of participants will host if that school possesses the necessary facilities to do so.
- iii. Whenever possible, each school will have a coach to facilitate transportation, communication, advocacy, and athletic instruction.
- iv. See 2.d.i for notes on merging and transportation for practice.

2. Practice Expectations

a. Attendance

- i. Students are expected to attend all scheduled practices.
- ii. If a student cannot attend a specific practice, this should be communicated with the coach as soon as possible by the parent/caregiver.
- iii. Coaches may limit the participation of students who miss practice in the subsequent competition.
- iv. Student-athletes are encouraged to participate in only one athletic activity per quarter. Participation in other school activities that conflict

with practice are also discouraged if the conflicting opportunities are offered during other quarters of the school year.

b. Equipment

- i. Coaches must communicate with families at the beginning of the season, or preferably prior to the start of the season, any and all personal equipment that families are responsible for providing.
- ii. Students are expected to arrive at practice with all of the necessary personal equipment each day in order to fully participate in practice.
- iii. Coaches will inventory and check-out school-issued equipment to athletes. The student is responsible for keeping track of and taking good care of school-issued equipment. Families may be charged for lost or damaged school-issued equipment.
- iv. Students will be provided with a locker and a lock to store both personal and school-issued equipment.

c. Effort & Attitude

- i. Student-Athletes are expected to consistently put forth their best efforts in practice. Failure to do so will result in 1) a private conference with the coach about effort expectations and factors that may be limiting effort, 2) a parent communication from the coach explaining examples of a lack of best effort on behalf of the student-athlete, and 3) limited participation in the subsequent competition.

d. Transportation

- i. In the event of a combined team where LMCMS students practice at a different location, busing will be provided to transport student-athletes to practice. However, the busing company is not able to provide transportation after practices. Families that are not able to comfortably arrange for pick-up of student athletes are encouraged to reach out to coaches to assist in finding a ride home with a teammate.

3. Competition Expectations

a. Sportsmanship

- i. During competitions coaches, student-athletes, and spectators all serve in the role of representatives of our school. All parties are expected to be positive and supportive in their communications and actions towards all officials, student athletes, coaches, and school staff. Failure to do so will result in removal from the competition. Spectators that fail to meet these expectations will be ejected from the competition and can be barred from future attendance at USD 497 events.
- b. Playing Time/Participation
 - i. As a general policy, all healthy student-athletes should get an opportunity to participate on game day. Playing time on top-level (“A”) teams is left to coach discretion, with an emphasis on giving all student-athletes suited-up an opportunity to participate. On lower-level (“B”, “C”, etc.) teams coaches should try their best to balance playing time among student-athletes, barring any participation limitations mentioned in this document.
- c. Uniforms
 - i. Coaches may decide whether to check out uniforms to student-athletes for the season, or set out uniforms for athletes on the day of the competition. Like all school-issued equipment, the student-athlete is responsible for taking good care of uniforms and families may be charged for lost or damaged items.
- d. Transportation
 - i. Busing will be provided for transportation of coaches and athletes both to and from their off-site competitions. All student-athletes are expected to travel to competitions on the provided transportation.
 - ii. If families wish to transport their student-athlete home from competition, they must communicate this wish to the coach digitally prior to the team’s departure from school or face-to-face with the coach after the conclusion of the competition.

4. Classroom Expectations

a. Academics

- i. Students are expected to maintain good grades, at a minimum to stay in compliance with KSHSAA academic requirements for the subsequent semester's academic eligibility (must pass five this semester to play next semester).
- ii. Coaches are permitted to enforce in-season academic expectations for their athletics, as long as these policies:
 1. Limit participation, but do not exclude participation
 2. Have been cleared with the athletic director prior to the season
 3. Have been communicated to students and parents at the beginning of the season.

b. Behavior

- i. Student-athletes are expected to adhere to the stated behavioral expectations throughout their school. Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right. Students who are the subject of teacher behavior reports and/or are sent to the office for disruptive behavior will be held out of their practice. This missed practice may factor into decisions regarding level of participation in the next competition.
- ii. If a student-athlete is suspended (ISS or OSS, any number of days) they may not practice or compete during the entirety of the suspension period. If no competitions take place during the period of the suspension, the student-athlete will also sit-out the next scheduled competition.
- iii. If a student-athlete receives two periods of suspension during the same athletic season, that student will be barred from participation in that sport for the remainder of the season.

5. Communication

a. Communication Platforms

- i. Coaches are expected to use the ParentSquare app utilized by USD497 Public School to allow for consolidation of parent/caregiver communications into a single source of information.

- ii. Coaches will build and update contact lists for parents/caregivers and for student-athletes throughout the entirety of the season and use only this platform to send communications.
 - iii. Parents/Caregivers are welcome to use ParentSquare to district email accounts to communicate with coaches and the athletic director.
- b. Chain of Communication
 - i. See Appendix 8.a at the end of the document.

6. Miscellaneous

- a. Financials and Fundraising
 - i. All students that participate in an athletic activity will be assessed a \$50.00 activity fee in PowerSchool.
 - ii. Families may incur additional charges for lost or damaged school-issued equipment/uniforms.
 - iii. All team-level fundraisers and/or t-shirt orders must be approved by school administration and all money must be turned in to the school's administrative assistant in the main office. Coaches are not to collect any money from student-athletes or their families.
- b. Volunteer Coaches
 - i. Volunteer coaches are not permitted by USD 497. Any caregivers who believe they can provide additional instruction or expertise should reach out to the coach to offer their services. Coaches who believe that a parent can provide beneficial instruction should then communicate this with the athletic director. Any volunteer instruction must be done in the presence of a coach--volunteers may not work with student-athletes without the close direct supervision of a coach.

7. Appendices

7.a: Communication with Parents and Student-Athletes

Communication is a cornerstone to relationships. This is especially true in the coach-athlete relationship. Within this relationship, difficult issues must be dealt with at times, including discipline, player performance, and player dissatisfaction. Proper communication results in the positive resolution of such issues, stronger coach-player relations and other benefits such as the student learning how to solve problems.

Parents also have a relationship with their child's coach and communication is equally important to this relationship. As a student-athlete becomes involved in a program, he/she will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times where things do not go the way a parent or child wishes and parents may feel the need to step in on their child's behalf. Whatever the motive, proper communication will enhance coach-parent and coach-player relations. Please note the appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches include the following: one, the mental and physical treatment of a student-athlete; two, ways to help a student-athlete improve; and three, specific concerns regarding the parent's own student-athlete's behavior.

It is difficult to accept a student-athlete not playing as much as he/she or a parent would like. Coaches are professionals who make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be the best for the entire team, not individual players. The LPS (Lawrence Public Schools) Athletic Department believes in our coaches, whose job responsibilities include evaluating and selecting student-athletes, as well as determining the degree to which each student-athlete will participate – a job they complete thoroughly and with considerable sensitivity. During the selection process, coaches will evaluate skill level, athleticism, physical conditioning, positional play, trainability, punctuality, and various other attributes.

The LPS Athletic Department wants our student-athletes to learn the value of being on a team and the contribution each must make. Team members have a responsibility to themselves, their teammates, and their coaches to learn and perform their role on the team. Teamwork requires the development of many interpersonal skills, such as listening, following directions, accepting constructive criticism, being respectful, and supporting teammates and coaches. Student-athletes have an obligation to participate in practice and games with total commitment and enthusiasm.

We believe that playing time in a game is earned and is not an entitlement. Regardless of the subjective nature of the process and the potential for disagreement, the coach is only one in a position to make team selections and decisions about playing time. Furthermore, members of a Varsity team are not guaranteed playing time. Student-athletes should fully understand that, by joining a team, they are accepting the benefits of participating as well as the responsibility and commitment to that team, regardless of whether or not they earn playing time in a game. Please note the following concerns/topics are deemed inappropriate and should not be discussed with a coach: one, team strategy; two, play calling; three, playing time; four, team position; and five, other student-athletes.

The following is a guide for coaches, parents and student-athletes. This guide provides a chain of communication that will maintain and build positive relationships.

Step One: Coach-Athlete Session

If a player or his/her parent has any issue or problem with the sport experience, the student-athlete is expected to address the coach. Students are also encouraged to talk with a coach about any issue in their personal or academic life. The District's expectations of coaches include open communication and positive relations.

Step Two: Coach-Parent-Athlete Session

If an issue has not been resolved in Step One, the next step in the communication process is a meeting with the parents. The guideline here is to set an appointment at the coach's discretion. If the issue is emotional, the appointment should be scheduled at a later time so parties are calm and problem solving can occur. Also, the parent or player should define the purpose of the session when the appointment is set. In this step, there may be rare cases when it may be best if the athlete does not participate in the session. If either the parent or coach feels this is the case, this decision should be discussed when setting the appointment and purpose of the meeting.

Step Three: Administrator-Coach-Parent-Athlete Session

If an issue is not resolved in Step Two, the next step may be initiated by any party. Using the same process as above, an appointment is set and all parties define the purpose of the meeting.

7.b: LPS Anti-Hazing Policy

All coaches will be required to include the following language in their athletic handbooks and/or other materials that they distribute to both the athletes and parents. Additionally, coaches should cover the following Hazing Guidelines in their pre-season athlete/parent meetings.

Hazing is defined as any activity expected of a member of a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, endangers, or risks physical or emotional harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate.

Often, a high-status member of a group orders other members to engage in, or suggests that they engage in, activity that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist because he/she wants to gain admission or acceptance into a group.

Examples of hazing include, but are not limited to, embarrassing appearance or acts, wearing of public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste, engaging in public stunts and/or attention-drawing behaviors, morally degrading or humiliating games or activities and any other activities which are not consistent with the educational environment.

Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times. Any student or group of students involved in these activities will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school. No administrator, faculty member, or other employee of the school district shall encourage, permit, condone or tolerate any hazing activities. No students or student leaders of organizations shall plan, organize or engage in any hazing activities.