

Marblehead High School Student-Athlete Handbook

2026-2027

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Athletic Department Mission

At Marblehead High School, athletics is an integral part of the educational experience for many students. Athletic competition can play an important role in a student’s physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Winning is the object of the game, but our purpose as administrators and coaches is to challenge students to do their very best, to compete, to be resilient, to take responsibility, and to prepare them to succeed in athletics, academics, and life. A true measure of success is evaluating how each student improves, prepares for intense competition, and how he/she handles failure as well as success. Backed by experienced coaches and outstanding support from the town, Marblehead athletes learn the values of sportsmanship, respect, teamwork, and commitment. Student-athletes push themselves to improve, realize their academic and physical potential, and prepare themselves for the world after Marblehead High School.

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any education programs offered by Marblehead Public Schools.

Program Goals & Playing Time

The goal of The Marblehead Athletic Department is to provide safe, enjoyable athletic programming for the benefit of as many student-athletes as possible. Each team will do their very best to compete successfully with Northeast Conference & non-league opponents and with teams or individuals of a similar division in state competition.

Sub-varsity sports provide many opportunities for student-athletes to experience athletic competition and share the experience and benefits of team membership. Emphasis is on developing basic skills, appropriate attitudes, values, and team concepts.

Participation at the varsity level is limited to the most highly skilled players and those with the ability to interact with other players for team success. Assessment will be made by the coach relative to the level of play, (V, JV, or Freshman) most beneficial to the development and progress of each player.

Playing time will be limited for some student-athletes, and not every student-athlete will play in varsity games. At the sub-varsity level, every player will have an opportunity to play in the games, but not equally and not necessarily in every game. Who the starters are and playing time are determined by the coach's evaluation of attitude, skills, game strategy, and team role.

Clearance for Participation

No student athlete shall be allowed to practice or compete until he/she is cleared for participation.

- Clearance includes completion of the following:
 - Signed parental permission.
 - Physical Examination. All students must pass a physical examination within 13 months of the **start of each season. Students who meet the criterion at the beginning of the season will remain eligible for that season.**
- Academic Eligibility Check - See Academic Policies.

Payment of User Fee.

“The School Committee recognizes the need for student fees to fund certain school activities. It also recognizes that some students may not be able to pay these fees. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges.”

- Fees are waived for students who qualify for an athletic waiver

Team Tryout/Selection

During the tryout period, each coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is the duty of the student to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can fulfill these expectations. Students not selected are encouraged to explore other athletic opportunities. The coaching staff of each sport has the sole responsibility for selecting the members of the team, determining the level of play most beneficial to the development of each player, and the amount of playing time. Player concerns should be addressed first between the player and the coach. If a significant resolution is not reached, parents should plan on a meeting with the coach. (See conflict resolution process)

Code of Conduct

Expectations for student-athlete behavior are based on the philosophy that participating in interscholastic athletics is a privilege for some rather than a right for all. Abuse of any privilege may result in its removal. Student-athletes represent their team, coaches, school, their families, hometown, and themselves. It is important to realize that to continue as a student-athlete at Marblehead High School, athletes must exhibit a high standard of personal conduct. Student-athletes are always expected to exhibit; sportsmanship, integrity, responsibility, teamwork, and respect.

Team Captains

The position of captain is one of honor, leadership, and responsibility. Captains are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. Captains are to be leaders on the field, in school, at off-season sporting events, and in the community. Captains are responsible for motivating and inspiring their teammates, leading by example in terms of work ethic, attitude, and sportsmanship. Captains often serve as liaisons between coaches and players, helping to communicate team strategies and expectations. Additionally, they may organize team activities, lead fundraising, and help build a successful team culture.

All captains are required to be part of “The Captains Leadership Council”.

Once a student is elected a team captain and he/she violates any MIAA, MHS, or MHS athletic handbook policy, at any time during the year, they may lose the privilege of being a team captain. Marblehead High School student athletes are not eligible to be nominated or voted on as a captain for one year from the date, he/she violates the MIAA or Marblehead High School’s Chemical Health policy.

Discipline

The following forms of discipline may be used by the Athletic Department for warranted reasons, which include but are not limited to the categories listed on these pages.

TEAM: Coaches and their assistants are granted the capacity to help set team rules that provide common experiences for each team member within the parameters and scope of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), Marblehead High School (MHS), and the mission of the Marblehead Athletic Department. The Marblehead Athletic Department believes that a person is evaluated by what he/she says and does. Matters that affect only the team and its day-to-day operation are handled within the team structure. However, severe disciplinary actions, such as dismissal from the team or prolonged suspension, must be reported to the Athletic Director.

STUDENT: The Athletic Department recognizes that high school-aged students may, on occasion, make inappropriate decisions in their personal lives within our community. The Athletic Department does not intend to punish student athletes twice for the same offense. However, the Department reserves the right to decide if an offense infringes on our mission and integrity and hand out an appropriate sanction ranging from suspension to removal from the team.

GROUP: The Athletic Department and the high school reserve the right to withhold privileges from the entire team should egregious acts be committed anywhere by any number of team members in the name of the team.

Detentions

Assigned detentions must be served before a student attends a club, organization, activity and/or sport. Student-athletes will not be allowed to try out, practice or play in a game if they have not served their detentions. If a student wants to participate in athletics, they need to stay off the detention list.

Athletic Program Conflict Resolution Process

Athletic involvement, while fun and rewarding, can be very emotional and time-consuming. Due to the level of effort and emotion invested, conflicts between the coach and player will arise. All conflicts are to be addressed professionally and in a timely manner. The following steps will be used.

FIRST STEP: Student-Athlete – Coach Contact

The student-athlete will meet individually, in person, with the coach to discuss the conflict/issue. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to make every attempt to meet with the coach before any other people get involved.

Times to be avoided:

- Either immediately prior to or right after a contest
- During an active practice session
- During a time when other students are present or when the discussion is readily visible to others.
- When it is apparent that there is not sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion. During those situations, a student should set up a time to meet with the coach.

SECOND STEP: Parent of student-athlete and coach contact (with student-athlete)

Only after the student-athlete has made every effort to contact the coach should the parent of the student-athlete get involved. The parent will follow the guidelines in First Step. The student-athlete must be present with the parent during the parent-coach in-person meeting.

THIRD STEP: Student/Parent and Athletic Director Contact

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student and parent should contact the Athletic Director. The coach must be informed that this contact is going to be made. If a meeting is to take place between the student, parent, and athletic director, the coach must be present. Issues concerning coaching personnel may not be publicly communicated. All comments or input about coaching must be put in writing to the attention of the athletic director.

FOURTH STEP: Student and Principal Contact

If a satisfactory resolution has not yet been reached, the student and parent should contact the high school principal. The Athletic Director should be informed that this contact is going to be made. If a meeting is to take place between the student, parent, and principal, the athletic director must be present.

Religious Holidays

The Marblehead High School Athletic Department does not exclude students, from participation, on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness. The Marblehead High School Athletic Department respects the individual student-athletes' wishes, and obligation, to observe major religious holy days. Student-athletes will not be subject to reduced playing time if they choose to observe a major holy day in lieu of an athletic team obligation. Major holy days include, but are not limited to, Passover, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Good Friday, Easter, Christmas and Ramadan.

Academic Eligibility

1. Academic eligibility (Academics will be monitored during the season, and poor grades may result in removal from a team.)

Eligibility	
Quarter	Based Upon
1	End of the Year Final Grades
2	First Quarter Grades
3	Second Quarter Grades or Final Grades of Semester One Courses
4	Third Quarter Grades

- In order to qualify for participation, a student must have no failing grades on his/her report card. Eligibility for First Quarter is determined by final grades for the year preceding the activities. Second Quarter eligibility is determined by First Quarter grades. Third quarter eligibility is determined by Second Quarter grades. If a one-semester class has a final grade for the First Semester, the First Semester grade will determine the Third Quarter eligibility for that one-semester class. Fourth Quarter eligibility will be determined by Third Quarter grades. Eligibility will be removed or re-sorted in a manner consistent with MIAA policy; that is, on the date on which report cards are issued. In all other matters concerning this policy, unless otherwise stated, the District will follow MIAA policy. In extreme situations due to a student's health (documented by medical personnel) or family circumstances (e.g., death of an immediate family member) the Principal may review the student-athlete's eligibility status for one marking period.
- A student must take the required number of courses.
- Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determined only on the date when the report cards for that marking period have been issued to the parents of all students within a particular class.
- A student receiving an "I" (incomplete) for a grade may have her/his eligibility status reviewed at the time any incomplete is changed to a passing grade. No credit toward eligibility can be received from a repeated subject for which one has already received credit. Summer work credits will not count toward eligibility unless the course has already been pursued.
- If a student-athlete receives an "N" grade for a quarter, the student-athlete will be ineligible for the quarter. A student receiving an "N" for a grade may have her/his credit status reviewed at an Attendance Panel Review Board.

- To be considered in attendance for the day (and be eligible for athletic activities), a student must arrive before 9:00AM and remain for the rest of the day. Any exception to this, such as for bereavement or medical appointments, must be approved by the Athletic Director or Principal.

2. A student shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive seasons beyond the 8th grade. Example: 4 fall seasons, 4 winter seasons, 4 spring seasons.

3. A participant shall be an undergraduate.

4. A participant shall not be over 18 years of age, unless he/she has his/her 19th birthday AFTER September 1 of the present school year.

5. Special permission must be granted for a player with one diseased or missing organ or limb (e.g., eyes, kidney, arms, legs, etc.)

6. A permission form must be signed by the parent/guardian and the student-athlete prior to any practice or play.

Hazing

As required by Massachusetts State Code, Chapter 536, and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 269, sections 17-19 of the Acts of 1985, all secondary schools must:

- Adopt anti-hazing policies as part of their disciplinary policies.
- The law requires that secondary schools provide all school groups (e.g., athletic teams) a copy of the law and collect a signed acknowledgment from a contact person (coach) for each student organization.

Applicable sections of the statute are as follows: State Definition: Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, shall be punished by a fine, or by imprisonment in a house of correction, or both.

The term “hazing” as used in this section shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal or sexually inappropriate treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical and mental health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or extended isolation.

Consent by any such student or other person shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution this action. (You have the responsibility to reasonably foresee the results of your actions.)

Failure To Report Hazing: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined above and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official (or coach, athletic director, Principal, Assistant Principal, faculty or staff member) as soon as is reasonably possible. Whoever fails to report is punishable by the State of Massachusetts.

MIAA/MHS Chemical Health Rule

Participation in Marblehead athletics is a privilege and is voluntary; participation comes with an increased standard for behavior expectations. The Marblehead High School standard is designed to encourage responsible and safe decision making by all students and to promote a positive learning environment within the Marblehead community. Marblehead High school, as a member of the MIAA, meets or exceeds their standards for code of conduct and discipline.

During the school year a student-athlete shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, vape pens and all similar devices); marijuana, steroids, drug paraphernalia; or any controlled substance. This policy includes misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one’s mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her doctor.

All violations are subject to a hearing with MHS Administration. The following are used for punishments, per the MIAA Handbook, Rule 62:

1 st offense – 25%		2 nd offense – 60%		2 nd offense – 40% with dependency program	
Number of events per season	Number of events per penalty	Number of events per season	Number of events per penalty	Number of events per season	Number of events per penalty
1-7	1	1-3	1	1-4	1
8-11	2	4	2	5-7	2
12-15	3	5-6	3	8-9	3
16-19	4	7-8	4	10-12	4
20 or over	5	9	5	13-14	5
		10-11	6	15-17	6
		12-13	7	18-19	7
		14	8	20 or over	8
		15-16	9		
		17-18	10		
		19	11		
		20 or over	12		

Student/athlete may be allowed to participate in another sport to serve a chemical health violation suspension but will only count if they complete season in good standing.

MIAA/MHS Chemical Health Rule note: Every game played with an ineligible player shall be forfeited to the opposing team up until the time said player is removed from the squad.

MIAA Sportsmanship: Taunting

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players or spectators, which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens, based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs, or personal characteristics.

Examples of taunting include but are not limited to: “trash talk”, defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/her skills, efforts, sexual orientation, or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or physical response; and physical intimidation outside spirit of the game, including “in the face” confrontation by one player to another, standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player, etc.

Taunting offenses: Students who participate in such activities will be removed from the event and school discipline may be administered. In addition, the student may be banned from attending all extra-curricular activities throughout the school year.

Student Extracurricular Fundraising Guidelines and Expectations

The Marblehead Public Schools offers school-sponsored student athletic, performing and fine/applied arts and extracurricular clubs, activities and events as a part of the student’s overall education experience. These offerings are considered district sponsored operational activities and as such, are funded as a part of the annual budget process.

Student team and club-based fundraising initiatives, outside of established organizations such as the Boosters, may occur, as a supplement to the operational costs of district extracurricular activities, within the parameters outlined in this section.

Objectives/Considerations for extracurricular student athletic and club fundraising

The fundraiser promotes team and school community and collaboration

- Fundraiser participants are **voluntary** in nature and attendance in the event
- The fundraiser provides students and/or district staff, coaching, advisory, or otherwise, a positive philanthropic experience
- The event raises funds with specific funding intent or goal in mind, that is **not** a part of the school’s annual operating budget
- Coaches may coordinate team, club or advisory student fundraisers, with oversight from appropriate district staff, (athletic department staff or building principal) recognizing appropriate timing and coinciding student commitments

What student fundraising proceeds may fund:

- Spirit-wear, team-wear, specialty uniform outside of a base game or event uniform (ie: sweats, warm up gear, jackets, hats)
- In or out-of state-trips or events, specialized camps, invitational tournaments or events, outside of official team game or event league or conference schedule (including transportation as appropriate)
- Social events including team meals, events, banquets

What student fundraising proceeds WILL NOT fund:

Students and families can generally expect the following resources to be funded at the district level as operational provisions of the team, club or activity:

- Athletic team game uniform
- Standard district provided equipment (varies by team)
- Team conference or league membership fees
- Fees for rental or use of facility for games or events
- Game or event officials or referees

Uniforms and Equipment

All uniforms and equipment issued to student athletes remain the property of Marblehead High School. Please treat the items with care so that the school is continually well represented. An athlete will be responsible financially for what is issued to him/her and not returned.

The Athletic Department does not buy travel/warm up suits or shoes for teams. Each team, through its head coach, has the opportunity to fundraise for these types of items. The Athletic Department reserves the right to protect its image and the representation of its name. Therefore, color schemes and lettering must be approved by the Athletic Department regardless of the source of funding.

Transportation

Student-athletes are expected to travel with their team on the bus to and from games.

To be released from this obligation, a "Athletics Transportation" form must be on file with the head coach and Athletic Department before the trip begins. The party that releases you must be a parent or legal guardian. Athletic Transportation forms are available on the Marblehead Athletics homepage.

If a student cannot make departure time, he/she will not attend that game. Private vehicles are not permitted for transporting students to games unless an Athletics Transportation Form is in effect.

Athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a proper manner on all bus trips. Yelling at passing cars, obscene gesturing, unruly conduct, or other forms of inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.