

**Manchester Essex Regional School District
Athletic Department**



**Student-Athlete Handbook
2026 - 2027**

Manchester Essex Regional High School – Contact Information

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MANCHESTER ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, RELIGION, COLOR, NATIONAL BASIS, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABILITY, OR AGE IN ITS EMPLOYMENT, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.

Welcome to the Manchester Essex Athletic program! The material presented in this handbook has been compiled to better acquaint you and your family with some of the practices and regulations that govern the athletic program at MERSD. The Athletic Handbook is intended for students and parents.

For students, this Athletic Handbook will help you understand what you can expect and what is expected of you. We hope you learn that most problems can be solved through open, honest, and sensitive communication.

For parents, we hope this Athletic Handbook will help you understand MERSD's athletic policies so that you may be assured that MERSD, its athletic department, and coaching staff is doing everything possible to teach athletes fundamental values that transcend sports.

Please refer to this Athletic Handbook when questions and/or concerns about your athletic experience at MERSD. If your questions or concerns are not answered within this handbook, please speak with your child's coach or feel free to call the athletic office at the school. Do not let your questions or concerns go unanswered or unresolved.

Cameron Oringer, CAA, MS
Athletic Director
Manchester Essex Regional School District

Important Websites

Athletics Homepage: <https://www.mersd.org/Page/38>

Athletics Schedules: <https://arbiterlive.com/Teams?entityId=13656>

Practice Schedules: <https://www.gobound.com/ma/schools/meregional>

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA): www.miaa.net

GoFan Online Ticketing: <https://gofan.co/app/school/MA14626>

Follow us on Twitter & Instagram: @MEHornets

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Fall Sports Offerings

- Cheerleading: Varsity (open to students in grades 7-12)
- Girls Cross Country: Varsity, Middle School (open to students in grades 6-12)
- Boys Cross Country: Varsity, Middle School (open to students in grades 6-12)
- Field Hockey: Varsity, JV, Middle School (open to students in grades 6-12*)
- Football: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Golf: Varsity, Middle School (open to students in grades 7-12)
- Girls Soccer: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)
- Boys Soccer: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)

Winter Sports Offerings

- Girls Basketball: Varsity, JV, JV2, Middle School (open to students in grades 7-12*)
- Boys Basketball: Varsity, JV, JV2, Middle School (open to students in grades 7-12)
- Gymnastics: Varsity - Coop w/ Hamilton-Wenham (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Girls Hockey: Varsity - Coop w/ Gloucester (open to students in grades 8-12)
- Boys Hockey: Varsity, JV - Coop w/ Rockport (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Girls Indoor Track & Field: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 7-12*)
- Boys Indoor Track & Field: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 7-12*)
- Girls Alpine Skiing: Varsity (open to students in grades 7-12*)
- Boys Alpine Skiing: Varsity (open to students in grades 7-12*)
- Girls Swimming & Diving: Varsity - Coop w/ Hamilton-Wenham (open to students in grades 8-12)
- Boys Swimming & Diving: Varsity - Coop w/ Hamilton-Wenham (open to students in grades 8-12)

Spring Sports Offerings

- Baseball: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)
- Girls Lacrosse: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)
- Boys Lacrosse: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)
- Softball: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 8-12*)
- Sailing: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 7-12)
- Girls Tennis: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Boys Tennis: Varsity, JV (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Girls Outdoor Track & Field: Varsity - Coop w/ Gloucester (open to students in grades 9-12)
- Boys Outdoor Track & Field: Varsity - Coop w/ Gloucester (open to students in grades 9-12)

**Middle school student participation in high school programs is subject to MIAA approval. Middle school students are only eligible to try out if high school registration numbers are low.*

Athletic Department Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics is a vital part of the entire educational program offered at Manchester Essex Regional High School. Educational athletics is viewed as an extension of the classroom that provides outstanding opportunities to teach life lessons. Through participation in such programs, student-athletes learn values and skills that help prepare them for the future.

Leadership, goal setting, teamwork, perseverance, sacrifice, commitment, and overcoming adversity are inherent in the interscholastic framework and also supports the academic mission of MERSD. The athletic program shares with the other elements of a Manchester Essex education to contribute to the development of the whole child. The experiences through athletic participation is an essential part of a holistic approach encompassing the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual elements of each student. MERSD student-athletes take pride in themselves, their team, school, and community while learning to work together toward a common goal. Every student-athlete should enjoy the experience of being a team member.

Tryouts for athletic programs are open to all students providing they meet the standards of academic eligibility, school citizenship, parental permission, and basic physical/health qualifications. These standards are set forth by the MIAA, Cape Ann League, and MERSD. Participation in athletics is a privilege earned by students who meet and maintain these standards. These sport activities are open to any student who wishes to participate with the understanding that some teams have a limited number of players per team, while others have an unlimited roster.

As a member of the MERSD Athletic program, student-athletes are expected to display characteristics of ethical conduct and fair play, both on and off the playing fields. All student-athletes are expected to obey the law and follow the rules of the MIAA and MERSD. They are expected to show respect for fellow players, coaches, officials, fans, members of the opposing team, equipment, and facilities. Coaches are expected to be leaders as well as teachers, educating student-athletes and trying their best to help their team win. Winning should never come at the expense of academics, good sportsmanship, integrity, or safety.

Goals of the Program

- To provide an opportunity for maximum athletic developments of players of all abilities.
- To promote the social, intellectual, emotional, and physical development of students.
- To develop an understanding of the value of cooperation, teamwork, and competition.
- To develop good citizenship and respect for rules and authority.

Objectives Pertaining to the School

- To provide an athletic program that reflects a level of expertise comparable to school wide curriculum.
- To provide students with an opportunity to participate as competitors or fans.
- To learn to respect our opponent teams and players.
- To sponsor a sports program in accordance with the number of available student-athletes, adequacy of facilities, equipment, and competent instruction.
- To develop a sense of school spirit, morale, and loyalty.

Code of Ethics for MERSD Athletics

- Emphasize good sportsmanship, upright conduct and the spirit of fair play.
- Place a premium on the values which accrue from fair play.
- Eliminate the practices which tend to destroy the worthwhile values of the game.
- Teach respect and consideration for the opponents as either guests or hosts of the game.
- Cultivate respect for the authority of school personnel, coaches, and game officials.
- Develop self-awareness, self-control, self-direction, and sound judgment.
- Discourage profanity and obscene language at all times.
- Demonstrate that the rules of the game are mutual agreements, honorable in spirit as well as in letter, and that stealing of an advantage in sports is dishonorable.
- Convince everyone that athletics aims to promote mental, social, physical, intellectual, and moral welfare of the participants.

Code of Conduct for MERSD Student-Athletes

Athletics is an integral part of the school's total educational program. All school activities, curricular and extra-curricular, in the classroom and on the playing field, must be congruent with the school's stated goals and objectives established for the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of its students. It is within this context that the following Code of Ethics is presented.

As an athlete, I understand that this is my responsibility to:

1. Place academic achievement as the highest priority.
2. Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials and coaches.
3. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
4. Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship and proper conduct on and off the playing field.
5. Maintain a high level of safety awareness.
6. Refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity and other offensive language and gestures.
7. Adhere to the established rules and standards of the game to be played.
8. Respect all equipment and use it safely and appropriately.

9. Know and follow all state and school athletic rules and regulations as they pertain to eligibility and sports participation.
10. Win with character, lose with dignity.

Message to Spectators and Parents

We encourage you to support MERSD Athletics by:

- Attending games both home and away.
- Lending positive support to our teams and coaches.
- Encouraging all players without regard to their role on the team.
- Helping other spectators and parents maintain an appropriate sportsmanlike attitude.
- Showing respect for the authority of the game officials.

Parental Role in Assisting Student-Athletes to Achieve Success in Athletics

- To attend informational meetings offered by the Athletic Department.
- To work closely with school personnel to assure an appropriate academic as well as athletic experience for your child.
- To assure that your child will attend all scheduled practices and athletic contests.
- To require your child to abide by the MIAA, Cape Ann League, and MERSD rules.
- To acknowledge the authority of the coach in determining strategy and player selection.
- To model mature behavior as well as expect the same from your child.
- To work cooperatively with other parents and school personnel to ensure a wholesome and successful Athletic Program at MERSD.
- To identify a reasonable and realistic future for your child as a student-athlete.

Athletic Philosophy by Level

Middle School Philosophy

- To emphasize development of skills, teamwork and sportsmanship.
- Emphasis is made to allow all students an opportunity to play in games.
- The amount of playing time is based on commitment, effort, and attitude.

JV Philosophy

- More emphasis on team unity and strategy development.
- Opportunity to play based on commitment, effort, and skill level.
- An emphasis is made to allow all students an opportunity to play in games.

Varsity Philosophy

- Opportunity to play in games based on skill level, effort, and judgment of the coach to optimize team performance. There is no guarantee of playing time.
- The goal is to have all members of the team feel a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and pride in their team whatever his/her role.

Access to Team Schedules

The Cape Ann League utilizes [ArbiterLive](#) to manage scheduling for athletic events. All games are posted on this site. If a game is changed, the site is updated as soon as possible. Parents and students are encouraged to sign-up for alerts from the site. Practices will be posted to our new website, [Bound Athletics](#). Families are encouraged to create an account.

Governing Bodies

1. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)

Manchester Essex High School is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association ([MIAA](#)), whose purpose is to organize, regulate and promote interscholastic athletics for secondary schools in Massachusetts. As an MIAA school, MERHS abides by the minimum standards set forth by this organization. Additional policies, regulations, and rules are set by the MERSD School Committee. Under the MIAA guidelines, local communities are allowed to set their own policies, rules, and/or regulations as long as they are more restrictive than stipulated by the MIAA. Rules governing individual sports vary depending on the sport.

One of the primary functions of the MIAA is to sponsor and conduct postseason tournaments. When our varsity teams qualify and enter into a tournament, we are completely subject to specific rules and regulations that govern each tournament, as stated by the MIAA. Tournament qualification, divisional placement, and district criteria are sport specific. Some of our varsity teams may host and/or compete in seasonal tournaments that are sponsored by local school districts or other agencies. MIAA regulations specify that such tournaments be sanctioned by the Association and be conducted totally under their policies, rules, and regulations. The MIAA does not sanction nor sponsor sub-varsity tournament competition.

2. The Cape Ann League (CAL)

Manchester Essex is very proud to be a member of the eleven school league known as the Cape Ann League. which comprises eleven area schools. The League is governed by the MIAA and its own Cape Ann League Constitution. Most of our game schedules, at all levels, are set by the league. The athletic department will also schedule non-league contests against schools from surrounding communities.

Most sport game schedules sponsored by the League at the varsity level are divided into two divisions for championship play, and for seasonal play at the JV levels. The Baker division includes schools from Manchester Essex, Georgetown, Amesbury, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich and Rockport. The Kinney division includes Lynnfield, Newburyport, North Reading, Pentucket, Triton and Essex Tech.

Rules and Regulations Governing Participation

The following is a list of important policies, practices, regulations, and rules that govern our athletic department. It is important that you take the time to read and understand them. If any questions and/or concerns arise during your athletic experience that are not addressed or answered in this handbook, please contact the Athletic Office.

- All students must abide by MIAA rules. These rules can be found on the MIAA website (<http://www.miaa.net>) in the handbook. Highlighted rules are listed below.
- Eligibility: A student shall be under 19 years of age by September 1st to compete in athletics. However, he/she may compete during the remainder of the school year provided that his/her nineteenth birthday occurs on or after September 1st of that year.
- All registrants must be enrolled in Manchester Essex Regional School District.
- All registrations for Athletics are to be completed at Family ID. Family ID is a secure registration platform that provides users with an easy, user-friendly way to register for our athletic programs, and helps MERSD to be more administratively efficient and environmentally responsible. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to share medical information they feel is important to the health and safety of their child with the transportation department and all before and after school programs/clubs including sports teams. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the Athletic Department with a change of any pertinent information throughout the school year.
- It is the policy of the Manchester Essex Regional School District to charge a user fee for student participation on an athletic team. The fee must be paid prior to the start of each season. If the payment has not been received, the student will be ineligible for practice. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch through food services will also qualify for a free or reduced athletic fee. No student will be denied access into any program because of inability to pay these supplementary charges. The high school will facilitate a payment plan if necessary to allow for student participation. If the payment plan is not met, the student will become ineligible for participation until the obligation is up to date.
- Fees paid to other schools as part of a cooperative program, are considered as part of the MERSD User Fee Cap.
- All registrations must be received by the registration deadline. Late registrations will be charged a \$40.00 late fee. Student athletes that are registered after the deadline may be ineligible to participate if the program has reached its maximum capacity.
- All students are required to turn in a copy of their most recent physical. Physicals are valid for 13 months and MUST be turned in to the Athletic Office via mail, fax, email, or in-person. A doctor's note in place of a physical exam is not acceptable (MIAA Rule #56). Physicals that expire during the season will deem a student athlete ineligible for participation unless an updated physical is on file in the athletic office.

- Students who plan to participate in any athletic program at either Manchester Essex Regional High School or Middle School and their Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must also take a free online course. Two free online courses are available and contain all of the information required by law. The first is available through the National Federation of High School Coaches. You will need to click the “order here” button and complete a brief information form to register. At the end of the course you will receive a course completion receipt. The entire course including registration can be completed in less than 30 minutes. The second online course is available through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Students who plan to participate in any athletic program at either Manchester Essex Regional High school or Middle School are recommended to take a free online course through the National Federation of High School Coaches entitled Implicit Bias.

Tryout Protocol

Tryouts for programs are open to all students providing they meet the standards of:

- academic eligibility
- school citizenship
- online registration and parental permission
- basic physical/health qualifications
- concussion management – ImPact Testing and Concussion Education Course
- user fee payment

Participation in athletics is a privilege; students try out voluntarily and, for some of our teams, risk being cut. During the tryout period the coach will provide an explanation of their expectations. The coach will communicate clearly to the student-athletes the tryout procedures at the athletics meeting prior to the start of the season. The explanation will include the following:

- a. Length of tryouts – discretion of coach
- b. Who the evaluator(s) will be
- c. Particular skills to be evaluated
- d. Rough number of participants who will be selected
- e. How the final roster(s) will be communicated to students

It is the student’s responsibility to demonstrate to the coach that he/she can meet them. It is the coaches’ responsibility to evaluate and communicate with each athlete during the tryout period and decide which students will be placed on the team. Students cut from one team are encouraged to try out for another team if there is space on that team. Students who are cut from a team will be informed as to the reason for the cut. After tryouts begin, no athlete may voluntarily leave one team and try out for another without the consent of both coaches involved. All students have the ability to join any non-cut sport program up to two weeks following the official start

date of a season. Tryout dates for all sports are as follows:

- Fall - *Practice begins in mid to late August (usually August 20-28). Please check with the Athletic Office for the exact date of individual sports.
- Winter - Practice begins on the Monday after Thanksgiving.
- Spring - Practice begins on the third Monday of March.

No parent should request a meeting with a coach on any level regarding team selections until the student-athlete has first spoken with the Head Coach. If at that point the student athlete is not satisfied as to why they didn't make the team, the parent has a right to request a meeting with both the player and the Head Coach. If resolution does not come from that meeting, the parent, the player, the Head Coach, and the Athletic Director can meet to resolve the issue.

Commitment

1. Daily

Every player who is chosen to be on an athletic team is expected to demonstrate a positive and winning attitude toward every task whether it be a practice or game situation. Each player will be expected to contribute to the total team effort whether it be from the bench or on the playing field. Indifference stifles success and, therefore, will not be tolerated in any form. Attitude is a key ingredient in the selection process for candidates to all teams. Each member of our athletic teams, Middle School, Junior Varsity (2), and Varsity, must:

- Commit to be present at all team activities including tryouts, practices, meetings and contests with other schools.
- Dedicate his/herself to becoming an excellent team member and school citizen.
- Strive to continually improve as an athlete.
- Demonstrate pride in team performance and in him/herself as a member of that team.

Realizing that these four qualities are necessary to achieve "Hornet Pride" we expect a high level of commitment from all of our student athletes within the broad context of their lives as MERSD students. When trying out for a team, and after being selected to be a member of a team at MERSD, students are expected to make at least a five day, two to three hour daily commitment to the team each week. At the sub-varsity level (MS, JV, JV2) some of our teams do not practice or play on the weekends, but students may expect practices or games each school day. Normally, practices will consist of an average of two hours of team activity per day taking place sometime between the hours of 2:30 pm to 9:00 pm. The preparation time before and after practices or games bring the potential total time to three hours. At the varsity level, weekend and/or evening practices and games are more commonplace and students should expect regular involvement during these times. Weekend practices/contests will take place between the hours of 9:00am and 9:00pm. Because many of our teams share facilities, or because some teams may use facilities off

campus, practice and game hours may vary considerably. It is extremely important that a coach be notified if a student is not going to be present at a practice or game if the student is not absent from school. The coaches in our program expect their athletes to be present at ALL team related activities and may suspend a team member from contests for absences. Students are excused from team activities for illness, injury, academic, family or religious reasons but prior notification is strongly recommended and expected.

2. Attendance Policy

- a. Attendance will be kept daily. This includes any scheduled practices or contests during vacation periods.
 - i. Players are expected to attend all practices and games. Daily attendance is imperative to the basic development of individual skill, fundamentals, as well as a sound foundation for team discipline, unity, spirit, commitment and loyalty.
 - ii. Players are encouraged to stay after school to make up ANY schoolwork. Upon arriving tardy for practice the player must produce a note from a teacher stating the reason for his/her tardiness.
 - iii. Players who miss practice for ANY reason should provide the coach with a note explaining the reason. Unexcused absences will be dealt with in the following manner:
 1. Attendance at Practice
 - a. On the first unexcused absence from practice: Suspension up to and including one athletic contest, at the coach's discretion.
 - b. On the second unexcused absence from practice: Suspension from the next two consecutive athletic contests.
 - c. On the third unexcused absence from practice: Expulsion from the team for the remainder of the season.
 2. Attendance at Contest
 - a. First unexcused absence from contest: Suspension from team each date of offense for a minimum period of one contest (allowed to practice, not allowed to participate in contest).
 - b. Second unexcused absence from a contest: Expulsion from team for the remainder of season.

Concussion and ImPACT Protocol

The MERSD Athletic Department has established protocols for the prevention, training, management and return to activity decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities. The protocol will be disseminated to all student athletes and will be updated, as appropriate.

1. Concussion Information

- a. **What is a concussion?** A concussion is an injury to the brain. It's usually caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head and can range from mild to severe. Most of the time a concussion does not involve a loss of consciousness. Even a "ding" or getting your "bell rung" can be serious.
- b. **How is it diagnosed?** Suspected concussions should be evaluated by the athletic trainer and a physician trained in concussion management. First, if you suspect a concussion, notify the athletic trainer and team coach so signs and symptoms can be assessed and recorded. The athletic trainer may also get information from people who were on site when the concussion happened. This is very important, especially if the athlete is confused or does not remember the injury. The athletic trainer will perform initial testing of strength, sensation, coordination, balance, and memory. In more serious cases, you will be referred to an ER or doctor for additional testing. If the athletic trainer cannot be reached, call your primary care physician or, go to the nearest emergency department for evaluation.
- c. **What signs and symptoms might I notice?** Individuals who have had a concussion will usually experience some of the following signs and symptoms listed on the front page in the minutes, hours, days and weeks after an injury. As a parent or guardian you might notice the following with your child:
 - i. Appears dazed or stunned
 - ii. Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
 - iii. Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
 - iv. Forgets instruction
 - v. Lethargic or abnormally tired
 - vi. Answers questions slowly
 - vii. Moves clumsily
 - viii. Can't recall events after hit or fall
 - ix. Is unsure of things they should know
 - x. Is confused about things they should know
 - xi. What symptoms warrant immediate medical attention?
 - Any loss of consciousness
 - Severe headache
 - Repeated vomiting
 - Confusion that gets worse
 - Difficulty walking, speaking or using your arms
 - Convulsions
 - Unusual sleepiness
 - Stiff neck
- d. **Does medicine help?** The treatment for concussion is rest. If you have a headache, try cool compresses on your head, such as an iced towel. Always ask your doctor

before you take any medicine if you have a concussion. Aspirin and anti-inflammatory medicines can complicate the injury.

- e. **When can my child return to sports?** The athlete must be cleared by a doctor or athletic trainer, as well as, have their ImPACT scores back to within normal limits before they may begin the gradual return to play protocol for their sport. You should never return to play while they still have any signs or symptoms of concussion. This includes town sports or other sports/activities that take place outside of the high school. This is crucial to their safety. Most athletes are ready to return to action in a week or two but every injury is unique and requires individual management. Both the physician and athletic trainer must give clearance to return to sports.
- f. **What are the risks of returning to play too early?**
 - i. Causing symptoms to persist weeks or months longer than they would with proper rest.
 - ii. Development of permanent symptoms or lowered thinking skills
 - iii. Catastrophic brain damage
- g. **Are there any lasting effects to a concussion?** Most people get better after a concussion without any permanent damage. People can have signs of concussion for weeks to months. After several concussions, your doctors may talk with you about changing sports.
- h. **Where can I find additional information?** You can find more information on concussions at these three sites: www.nfhslearn.com, www.impacttest.com and http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/high_school.html

2. **ImPACT Protocol (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing):**

The following protocol has been put into place for the MERSD student-athletes to provide the best treatment of a concussion for both academics and athletics.

- a. Prior to each sports season all student-athletes must have a baseline test using the ImPACT program. Once a student-athlete has been baseline tested their test results are good for two years.
- b. If an athlete experiences a hard fall or hits their head they are to be removed from play/practice immediately and will not be able to return until seen by the athletic trainer or a medical professional trained in concussion care.
- c. Coaches are to notify the athletic trainer, if the athletic trainer is not present. Coaches will also notify the students' parent/guardian of the injury.
- d. After a head injury, the athletic trainer will ImPACT test the student-athlete to help determine the extent of the concussion. If the scores are within normal limits as indicated on the test and no other signs or symptoms are present then the Gradual Return-to-Play protocol will begin. If the scores are not within normal limits or there are other signs and symptoms present then the athlete must see their primary care physician or another physician trained in concussion care. The athletic trainer will

notify the coach and the school nurse on what stage the athlete is in after taking the test.

3. Stages of Recovery

- a. Stage Red: Rest, Student typically does not attend school, strict limits on screen time/use of electronics/reading, no sports or rough housing. Rest.
- b. Stage Orange: Attend school half to full days, Rest at home, continue limits on screen time/use of electronics/reading, avoid school bus and heavy backpacks, no tests in school, no sports, band, chorus, PE. Rest.
- c. Stage Yellow: Attend school full time if possible, work with teachers regarding homework deadlines (“self advocate”), see school nurse for pain management if rest is needed, limit one quiz/test per day consider un-timed testing, work in 15 minute blocks completing as much homework as possible, no sports or PE.
- d. Stage Green: Attend school full time, self advocate at school (staggered due dates for assignments, tutor if needed), resume normal activities and classes, resume sports with Gradual Return-to-Play protocol.

4. Gradual Return-to-Play Protocol

- a. Stage 1: No activity
- b. Stage 2: Light aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, or stationary cycling) keeping intensity to 70% of maximum predicted heart rate; no resistance training.
- c. Stage 3: Sport-specific exercise (skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer); no head impact activities.
- d. Stage 4: Non-contact training drills, progression to more complex training drills, eg, passing drills in football and ice hockey; may start progressive resistance
- e. Stage 5: Full-contact practice following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities.
- f. Stage 6: Return to play

Highlighted MIAA Rules

Rule 45 Loyalty to the High School Team: Bona Fide Team Members

A bona fide member of the school team is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in all high school team sessions (e.g. practices, tryouts, competitions). Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity/event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. Students cannot be given special treatment (late arrival, early dismissal, etc.) for non-school athletic programs.

First Offense: Student-athlete is suspended for 25% of the season (see chart on Rule 62).

Second Offense: Student-athlete is suspended for an additional 25% of the season, and is ineligible for tournament play immediately upon confirmation of the violation. (See Rule 98 for additional tournament restriction and Rule 88 for waiver guidelines)

45.1 A student-athlete must be a Team Member for 50% of the regular season schedule for that sport to participate in any MIAA Tournament competition (team member: any student-athlete who attends practices or games for his/her sport teams – e.g. Freshman basketball player moved to JV and then to Varsity).

45.2 If ineligible, cannot be in uniform. Attendance at events to be determined by the High School Principal.

Rule 62 Chemical Health Rule for Co-curricular & Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

(Please note this policy based on the MIAA policy includes restrictions and consequences related to MERHS as well.)

In an effort to provide consistent consequences for all, Manchester Essex Regional High School informs all students participating in extracurricular, co-curricular, or athletic teams or clubs that they are subject to the MIAA's Chemical Health Rules.

As decreed by the MIAA, from the earliest fall practice until June 30 of each school year, a student athlete shall not use, possess, consume, buy, sell, or give away any illicit substance or product, regardless of quantity. These substances or products include any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product, marijuana, steroids, or any controlled substance. This policy includes “nonalcoholic” (NA) or “near beer.”

It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed by the student's doctor for the student's use. While in school, students may not carry prescription or other drugs. All drugs, prescription or otherwise, must be dispensed at the school's health office.

As stated in the MIAA guidelines, this regulation is not intended to render “guilt by association.” A Manchester Essex Regional High School student who is charged or summonsed by the police for being in possession or under the influence will be found to be in violation of the chemical health policy and will be subject to the penalties listed below. The Principal shall enact the penalty after receipt of a police report describing the offense.

Following are the minimum penalties for violation of this policy:

First violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following penalties will apply:

- Loss of eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests and/or extracurricular activities totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests/activities. No exception is permitted for a student even if the student becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is

recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. During the suspension a MERHS student may not be in uniform, however, students are expected to attend events to support their team/club unless otherwise prohibited by the high school principal.

1st Offense - 25% of Season

# of Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 - 7	1
8 - 11	2
12 - 15	3
16 - 19	4
20 or over	5

Other penalties include:

- The student will be required to meet with a school-based counselor two times prior to returning competition or performances. The goal of these meetings is to help the student process the incident and to determine if the student requires other social/emotional support.
- The student will lose any elected or appointed leadership position for the remainder of the academic school year.
- The student will not be eligible for any school award whose criterion includes positive citizenship, character or leadership for the remainder of the academic school year.
- Other penalties required by a league, chapter or society in addition to the above will apply.

Second and subsequent violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the following penalties apply:

- The student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests or activities totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests or activities.

2nd Offense - 60% of Season

# of Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 - 3	1
4	2
5 - 6	3
7 - 8	4

9	5
10 - 11	6
12 - 13	7
14	8
15 - 16	9
17 - 18	10
19	11
20 or over	12

- If during the second or subsequent violations the student of his/her own violation becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA or MERHS activities after a minimum of 40% of events provided the student was fully engaged in the program throughout that penalty period. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such a certificate of completion. All decimal parts of an event will be truncated i.e., all fractional parts of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season.

2nd Offense w/ Dependency Program (40% if in the program throughout the penalty period)

# of Events/Season	# of Events/Penalty
1 - 5	1
5 - 7	2
8 - 9	3
10 - 12	4
13 - 14	5
15 - 17	6
18 - 19	7
20 or over	8

Other penalties for a second offense include:

- The student will be required to meet with a school-based counselor two times prior to returning to competition or performances. The goal of these meetings is to help the

student process the incident and to determine if the student requires other social/emotional support.

- The student will lose eligibility for all appointed or elected leadership positions for the remainder of the academic school year and the following school year.
- The student will not be eligible for any school award whose criterion includes strong citizenship, character or leadership for the remainder of the academic school year and the following school year.
- Any other penalties required by a league, chapter or society.

Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.

Rule 58 Student Eligibility: Academic Requirements

58.1 A student must secure during the last marking period preceding the contest (e.g. second quarter marks and not semester grades determine third quarter eligibility) a passing grade, and full credit, in the equivalent of four traditional year-long major English courses. A transfer student may not gain academic eligibility if he/she was not, or would not be eligible at the sending school, unless transfer was necessitated by a move of parents and then eligibility would be determined by receiving schools eligibility standards (see Rule 57.7.1). (MIAA Handbook July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)

58.2 A student cannot at any time represent a school unless that student is taking courses which would provide Carnegie Units equivalent to four traditional year-long major English courses.

58.3 To be eligible for the fall marking period, students are required to have passed and received full credits for the previous academic year or the equivalent of four traditional year-long major English courses.

58.4 Academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determined on the published date when the report cards for that ranking period are to be issued to the parents of all students within a particular class.

Rule 63. Good Citizen Rule

63.1 Student-athletes may not represent their school if they are on in-house or out-of-house disciplinary suspension. A suspended student is ineligible for practice or competition for at least the number of days (or partial days) equal to the number of days of the suspension. Local policies will determine the actual days of ineligibility. (The Board of Directors suggests that policies be included in local Student Handbooks.)

Highlighted School Rules Pertaining to Athletics

Attendance

All students are required to be in school by **8:00 am** to be eligible to participate in after school activities.

Students who are dismissed during the school day are not eligible to participate that day. Only exceptions are made for excused dismissals (doctors, dentist, etc.)

Vacation Policy

It is strongly recommended that student athletes are available for practice and competition during school vacation periods. When students choose to participate in athletics, they are making a commitment to the team. Student's absence during the season is disruptive to their team and may impact the success of the team.

- Co-curricular trips, required by an academic class, are excused from this rule.
- If a student misses 4-6 days of practice and or games, the student is required to practice for 3 days before they may compete. These should be three consecutive days. If a game falls on one or more of those days, the coach will provide the student with a cardio-vascular workout to be completed prior to or after the competition.
- If a student misses 3 or fewer days of practice and/or games, the student is required to practice for 2 days before they may compete. These should be two consecutive days. If a game falls on one or more of those days, the coach will provide the student with a cardio-vascular workout to be completed prior to or after the competition.
- If a student is going to miss more than 6 days of practice and/or games, a meeting with the Athletic Director is required.
- Given the competitive nature of athletics, there is no guarantee that a student's position will be the same when they return.

Injuries

- All injuries should be reported to the athlete's coach.
- Coaches will refer athletes to the Athletic Trainer as needed.
- If an athlete needs to see a physician or any outside professionals regarding an injury or illness, they must bring a clearance note from the doctor to return to play.

Transportation of Students

- If a parent/guardian wishes to drive a student home from an away game, they must send the Athletic Director and the Coach a note requesting permission in the form of an email.
- The bus will stop in Essex to drop off students on the way home from an away game as long as the bus is driving through Essex. Parents/guardians must be waiting at the bus stop to pick up their child. If a parent/guardian is not there, students will stay on the bus and continue back to the High School.

After School Obligations

- Students cannot skip a detention for an athletic event (practice, game, bus)
- Students should go for extra help/tutoring after school when needed. A note from the teacher will excuse the student from being late to practice.

Selection of Team Captains

Captains are elected by team members and/or appointed by coaches. Prior to the selection, the coach will inform the team members of the selection criteria and obligations for the position. The coach will also provide the Athletic Director with this information in writing. The position of team captain is one of honor, leadership and responsibility. As a result, students serving in that capacity are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner both in and outside of school. Any leader that violates the MERHS Chemical Health policy is ineligible to serve as a captain for one year.

Conflict Resolution

Athletic involvement can be highly emotional and issues about playing time, team selection, honors and awards can arise. It is very important that these issues be addressed as soon as possible, and as directly as possible, so that they can be resolved promptly. The following model will be used when a problem arises.

STEP ONE: Personal Contact between Student-Athlete and Coach

As a general rule, the issue should be presented as soon as possible to the coach by the individual student-athlete. If personal contact is not practical, a student-athlete may ask his/her team captain to talk with the coach. If these recommended routes are not successful, the coach should be contacted by the student-athlete's parent(s) at an appropriate time. Times to be avoided are:

- Either prior to or immediately after a competition
- During a practice session
- During a time when other students may be present or when it may be readily apparent to others that a discussion is taking place
- At a time when it is apparent that there would not be sufficient time to provide for a complete discussion
- During the school day if the coach is also a teacher

Please wait 24 hours after a game/practice to contact the coach. Waiting until emotions subside allows for more meaningful discussions.

Usually the best solution is to ask the coach either via email or in person if an appointment could be made to discuss the issue. A parent or student-athlete could also contact the coach via the Athletic Office. **It is strongly recommended that the student-athlete join their parent(s) at this meeting to ensure that all sides of the issue can be thoroughly discussed.**

STEP TWO: Personal Contact Between Coach, Student-Athlete and Athletic Director

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student-athlete and/or parent(s) should contact the Athletic Director. As a courtesy, the coach should be informed that this contact is being made. If this discussion does not result in a satisfactory conclusion, then a meeting will be scheduled involving all concerned parties in an attempt to reach a satisfactory resolution. It is very important for all student-athletes and their parent(s) to know that any comments, concerns, or issues raised to the Athletic Director will be addressed with the coach. Issues concerning coaching personnel may or may not be communicated to others.

STEP THREE: Student-Athlete – Administration Contact

If there is not a satisfactory resolution, the student-athlete and/or parent(s) should contact the High School Principal. As a courtesy, the Athletic Director should be informed that this contact is being made. While there is no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future.

Student Use of Social Media

Students are encouraged to always exercise the utmost caution when participating in any form of social media or online communications, both within the MERHS community and beyond. Students who participate in online interactions must remember that their posts reflect on themselves and the entire MERHS community. Students should consider how they choose to portray themselves and the school.

Students are expected to abide by the following:

- To protect the privacy of MERHS students and faculty, students may not, under any circumstances, create digital photos, voice or video recordings of MERHS community members either on campus or at off-campus MERHS events for online publication or

distribution without the person's knowledge and approval of said photo and/or recording.
(An exception is for school sponsored publications)

- Students should not use social media sites to publish disparaging or harassing remarks about MERHS community members, athletic or academic contest rivals, etc. Students may be subject to significant disciplinary action.

Highlighted Massachusetts General Laws Pertaining to Athletics

Prohibition of Hazing

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property. Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department. Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days. Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days. Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant. In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

SOURCE: MASC LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19 Hazing

CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, 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 the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical 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 rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen 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 as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgement stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen. Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general of any such institution which fails to make such a report.

SOURCE: MASC

State Concussion Education Agreement Requirement

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services now requires that all schools subject to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules adhere to the following law.

Student-athletes and their parents/guardians, coaches, athletic directors, school nurses and physicians must learn about the consequences of head injuries and concussions through training programs and written materials. The law requires that athletes and their parents inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of the season. If a student athlete becomes unconscious during a game or practice, the law now mandates taking the student out of play or practice, and requires written certification from a licensed medical professional for “return to

Play.”

Students who plan to participate in any athletic program at either Manchester Essex Regional High School or Middle School and their Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must also take a free online course. Two free online courses are available and contain all of the information required by law. The first is available through the [National Federation of High School Coaches](#).

You will need to click the “order here” button and complete a brief information form to register. At the end of the course you will receive a course completion receipt. The entire course including registration can be completed in less than 30 minutes.

The second online course is available through the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

ROLE OF PARENTS

A partnership among parents, coaches, and players provides the foundation for a successful team experience. Attend pre-season coach/parent meetings (if applicable) and provide the coach with a means to communicate (e-mail address) to learn more about the expectations of the program. If there are concerns, please empower your son/daughter to take the initiative to speak with the coach. When on the sidelines, resist the temptation to “coach”, recognizing that you may confuse or contradict the coach’s instruction. Please do not publicly criticize the coach or teammates. It is crucial to the team’s success that our players develop respect for their coach. Support your son/daughter is doing their best at whatever level they participate.

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of character."

As a parent and/or spectator:

- I will not force my child to participate in sports.
- I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
- I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
- I will learn the rules of the game.
- I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.

- I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
- I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well-being of the athletes.
- I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participant for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I agree not to criticize, belittle, antagonize, berate or otherwise incite the opposing team, its players, coaches, cheerleaders, fans or officials/judges by word of mouth or by gesture.
- I will promote the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sporting events.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
- I will park my car only in assigned parking spots and not in illegal areas such as emergency lanes or handicapped spots.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or administration
- Written warning by administration
- Parental game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file
- Parental season suspension