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Billings Public Schools Athletics and Activities Coaching Handbook 2026-2027

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Introduction

Welcome to the Billings Public School Activities Coaching Handbook, a comprehensive guide designed to equip high school and middle school coaches and activities sponsors with the essential tools and principles to inspire, lead, and empower student-participants. Coaching is more than just a role; it's a responsibility, a commitment to nurturing not only talent but also character. In this handbook, we delve into the core values that define exceptional coaching: safety and well-being of student-participants, role modeling, culture, team, and player development.

Prioritizing Safety and Well-being: Ensuring the physical, emotional, and mental safety of student-participants by implementing proper training techniques, injury prevention measures, and creating an environment where student-participants feel supported, valued, and respected.

Being a Role Model: Being a positive example of integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership both on and off the field, court, or stage, inspiring student-participants to emulate these qualities and strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives.

Cultivating a Culture of Excellence: Fostering an environment where every member of the team is encouraged to pursue their highest potential, uphold standards of excellence, and continually strive for improvement, creating a collective commitment to achieving greatness.

Embracing the Power of Teamwork: Recognizing the strength that comes from collaboration, communication, and mutual support among team members, harnessing the diverse talents and strengths of individuals to achieve shared goals and overcome challenges together.

Promoting Player Development: Nurturing the holistic growth of student-participants by providing opportunities for skill development, personal growth, and character building, empowering them to become resilient, confident, and self-aware individuals.

Championing Sportsmanship: Demonstrating respect, fairness, and integrity towards opponents, officials, and teammates, regardless of the outcome of the competition, embodying the true spirit of sportsmanship through graciousness in victory and dignity in defeat.

This Coaching Handbook is more than just a manual; it's a roadmap for fostering excellence, integrity, and well-being in the world of extra-curricular activities and athletics. By embracing the principles outlined within these pages, you embark on a journey of transformation not only for your team but for the individuals who will carry these lessons far beyond the field, court, or stage.

The guidelines in this handbook represent the minimum standards. School principals may choose to enforce more stringent requirements at their discretion. It is your responsibility to ensure you have a solid understanding of any additional guidelines through collaboration with your school principal.

Equity

True equity is based not on the literal interpretation of laws, but from embracing the spirit of the philosophy. Every child, regardless of gender, merits equal treatment. Gender does not dictate the nature of programs offered to them.

All staff members within the BPS Activities Program are required to familiarize themselves with the guidelines outlined by MHSA, Ridgeway Settlement Agreement, and Title IX. Billings Public Schools is committed to upholding both the essence and specifics of the law concerning gender equity. Doing so serves the interests of child and aligns with moral principles. The spirit of equity, not just in terms of gender but across all areas, is to be instilled and upheld in the following aspects for equivalent programs:

1. Schedule
2. Practice Facilities
3. Uniform Purchase and Replacement
4. Hiring of Coaches
5. Evaluation of Coaches
6. Team Support (Boosters, etc.)
7. Media
8. Transportation
9. Number of Activities
10. Coaches' Pay
11. Meal Arrangements
12. Motel Accommodations
13. Game and Contest Facilities
14. Medical and Training Facilities



In addition to specific equity requirements in athletics, all activities staff members are expected to be knowledgeable of and sensitive to all forms of discrimination, bias, and harassment that may occur on the basis of gender, race, nationality, or other factors. All children deserve equal opportunity, treatment, and a chance for success. All of the material contained in this handbook applies to all student-participants, regardless of personal characteristics.

Billings Public Schools affirms that no person shall, on the basis of gender, be excluded from, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity.

All spending must be pre-approved by the school and/or Director of Athletics and Activities Coordinator and/or school principal in accordance with Title IX and Ridgeway equity requirements.

Students or employees with questions or complaints concerning the provisions of Title IX may contact their building representative or may contact the District Title IX Coordinator in the district Human Resources Office. Direct questions regarding the Ridgeway Settlement to the Director of Athletics and Activities.

IDEA Accommodations

Coaches, sponsors, and the entire coaching staff play a vital role in supporting students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). By meeting the following responsibilities, coaches contribute to the educational and developmental success of all student-athletes.

The responsibilities include:

- **Collaboration:** Work closely with special education staff, parents, and other school personnel to understand each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504, or other program, and ensure accommodations are implemented.
- **Inclusion:** Promote an inclusive environment where students with disabilities can participate fully and equitably in athletic programs.
- **Adaptation:** Modify drills, strategies, or equipment as needed to support individual abilities and ensure access to team activities.
- **Communication:** Maintain clear, respectful communication with students and families about goals, progress, and any concerns.
- **Compliance:** Follow district policies and federal regulations related to IDEA, including confidentiality and equal access.

McKinney-Vento Act Requirements

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law ensuring educational access and stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness. While coaches are not the primary enforcers, they play a vital supportive role within their school's compliance framework. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, school coaches must help ensure students experiencing homelessness are fully included in athletic activities without barriers. They are not responsible for determining housing status, but they must be vigilant, inclusive, and cooperative with school liaisons to uphold the law's protections.

The core responsibilities are as follows:

- **Awareness and Identification**
  - Coaches should be able to recognize signs of homelessness in student-athletes (e.g., inconsistent attendance, lack of proper gear, mentions of unstable housing), and refer concerns to the school's McKinney-Vento liaison.
- **Support Access and Inclusion**
  - Ensure students experiencing homelessness are not excluded from participation in school sports or extracurricular activities due to lack of:
    - Proof of residency
    - Guardianship documents
    - Physicals or immunization records
    - Transportation
- **Collaboration with Liaisons**
  - Work cooperatively with the district's McKinney-Vento liaison to support the student's full participation, including helping coordinate:
    - Transportation to practices or games
    - Access to equipment or uniforms
    - Flexibility around fees or eligibility documentation
- **Confidentiality and Sensitivity**
  - Maintain confidentiality and treat students with discretion and respect. Do not single out or label students facing housing instability.

- **Key Takeaways for Coaches**
  - Be alert to possible signs of homelessness among students.
  - Refer any concerns to the school's McKinney-Vento liaison.
  - Ensure full inclusion in sports — don't allow administrative barriers to prevent participation.
  - Avoid stigmatizing language or treatment.
  - Partner with school staff to remove barriers and provide support.

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

In Montana, school coaches—like all school employees working during regular school hours—are mandatory reporters under state law (Montana Code § 41-3-201) (leg.mt.gov). As mandatory reporters, coaches in Montana must act proactively — observe, identify, and report -- any signs of child abuse or neglect immediately to the proper authorities, while being protected legally for doing so in good faith. Failure to do so can result in criminal charges and civil liability.

The core responsibilities are as follows:

- **Duty to report**
  - If a coach, in their official capacity, knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected — by anyone — they must immediately report it to the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS).
- **Scope of obligation**
  - The duty arises from information acquired through professional or official capacity — such as observing injuries, disclosures by the child, or changes in behavior during practices or interactions.
- **Reporting channels**
  - Reports should be made promptly to DPHHS or local child protective services, and also include the building principal or the student's counselor. If there's imminent danger, law enforcement should be called immediately.
- **No confidentiality privileges**
  - There is no right to withhold a report due to professional confidentiality (e.g. coach–player conversations). Immunity applies for reports made in good faith.
- **Legal protection**
  - A coach who reports in good faith is protected from civil or criminal liability, even if the report turns out to be mistaken. However, deliberate failure to report is a misdemeanor with potential fines/jail time and civil liability for harm caused.
- **Key Takeaways for Coaches**
  - If you suspect abuse or neglect, based on observable signs or child disclosure — **report immediately**.
  - **Use professional judgment** — you don't need proof, just reasonable cause.
  - **Record what you know**: facts, timing, individuals involved — when reporting, identify yourself and your role.
  - **Act even if unsure** — you're empowered, not penalized, for reporting in good faith.
  - **Non-reporting has serious consequences** — you may face legal charges and be held liable for resulting harm.

BPS Coaches Creed

As a BPS Coach, I will….

- Treat all student-participants with dignity and respect and always work to ensure their emotional and physical well-being.
- Be a good role model and represent my school in a positive manner.
- Exhibit professional behavior at all times. Behave appropriately toward officials; avoid ejection or physically assaulting or detaining an official during or after a contest.
- Refrain from swearing and cursing. An occasional slip is understandable; however, regular use of foul language is unacceptable.
- Know and follow the rules and regulations of the school, district, MHSA, and the legal system.
- Know, promote, and support the Activities Code of Conduct.
- Report any violations of district policy that I might witness by other coaches and/or student-participants.
- Be on time and ready to participate in all meetings and workshops.
- Complete all required training and other paper work as requested.
- Encourage the healthy lifestyle choices that promotes a high level of performance.
- Communicate effectively with participants, parents, administrators, and other community stakeholders.
- Encourage my student-participants to participate in multiple sports and activities and support them in whatever they choose to do.
- Expect that all coaches and student-participants maintain a high level of sportsmanship and integrity while keeping these expectations in the proper perspective.

Activities Office Contact Information

Name	Responsibilities	Phone	Email
Mark Sulser	Executive Director of Athletics & Activities	406.281.5072	sulserm@billingsschools.org
Jacy Brownfield	Activities busing, lodging, officials scheduling & pay	406.281.5074	brownfieldj@billingsschools.org
Kelly Sharp	Drivers Ed, facility rentals, & stipends	406.281.5100	sharpk@billingsschools.org
Melissa Homer	Coaching certifications, substitutes, & equipment ordering.	406.281.5073	homerm@billingsschools.org

Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics

Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics Professional educators recognize and accept their responsibility to create learning environments to help all students reach their full potential. They understand the trust and confidence placed in them by students, families, colleagues, and the community. To achieve their professional purpose, educators strive to maintain the highest ethical standards. The Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics sets out these fundamental principles which guide their behavior.

Principle I. Commitment to Students and Families. The ethical educator:

A. Makes the well-being of students the foundation of all decisions and actions.

B. Promotes a spirit of inquiry, creativity, and high expectations.

C. Assures just and equitable treatment of every student.

D. Protects students when their learning or well-being is threatened by the unsafe, incompetent, unethical or illegal practice of any person.

E. Keeps information confidential that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves a compelling purpose in the best interest of students, or is required by law.

F. Respects the roles, responsibilities and rights of students, parents, and guardians.

G. Maintains appropriate educator-student relationship boundaries in all respects, including speech, print, and digital communications.

Principle II. Commitment to the Profession. The ethical educator:

A. Fulfills professional obligations with diligence and integrity.

B. Demonstrates continued professional growth, collaboration and accountability.

C. Respects the roles, responsibilities, and rights of colleagues, support personnel, and supervisors.

D. Contributes to the development of the profession's body of knowledge.

E. Manages information, including data, with honesty.

F. Teaches without distortion, bias, or prejudice.

G. Represents professional qualifications accurately.

Principle III. Commitment to the Community. The ethical educator:

A. Models the principles of citizenship in a democratic society.

B. Understands and respects diversity.

C. Protects the civil and human rights of students and colleagues.

D. Assumes responsibility for personal actions.

E. Demonstrates good stewardship of public resources.

F. Exemplifies a positive, active role in school-community relations.

G. Adheres to the terms of contracts, district policies and procedures, and relevant statutes and regulations.

Adopted by the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council July 13, 2016

Legal Duties for Athletics Director & Coaching Staff

"In leadership, there are no words more important than trust. In any organization, trust must be developed among every member of the team if success is going to be achieved." – Mike Krzyzewski

Athletic administrators have essential legal duties that must be performed to safeguard the health and well-being of student-athletes. As leaders in the athletic department and school, it is vital that trust is established with all staff in the department to execute that mission professionally, and athletic directors must trust their staff to carry out that mission.

Athletic directors' knowledge of the essential legal duties only satisfies a portion of the responsibility. The front-line people such as teachers, coaches and athletic trainers must also understand those legal duties for the department to function properly. Every staff member in the department should be on the same page regarding these essential legal duties with a coordinated plan to proactively minimize issues, address problems when they arise, protect students, and reduce the desire to pursue litigation.

The question becomes, "How and why do we educate already busy, underpaid teacher-coaches, non-teacher-coaches, workers, and athletic trainers on the fundamental essential legal duties. How do we get that knowledge to our front-line workers?

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) has established the 15 fundamental duties in the Leadership Training Course (LTC) 504. Using these 15 categories of legal duties, while not attempting to re-teach the four-hour course to coaches and front-line workers, staff members can be educated through incorporation of these duties during preseason coaches' meetings and trainings.

1. Planning

The duty to plan transcends all other duties. Written plans must be in place to fulfill all legal duties as imposed by the courts to protect student-athletes from harm. Coaches can be held liable for failing to plan and should have a documented comprehensive plan for their program that includes daily, weekly and monthly plans with detailed descriptions of practices, skills, drills, supervision and emergency response information. Using this duty to plan, emphasize the expectation that coaches should keep these plans for years in the future to protect themselves and the school corporation from possible future litigation. Consult district policies and state law for the required length of time that these records should be retained.

2. Supervision

The duty to supervise should be shared with coaches so that they understand their duty to supervise in both a general and specific manner. General supervision is the supervision of student-athletes for a reasonable time before and after athletic activity. Specific supervision is the supervision of student-athletes while engaged in the activity. While discussing the coach's duty to supervise it is also a great opportunity to discuss why coaches need to supervise and the issues that arise when supervision is neglected. Use the duty to supervise as a segue to talking about district policies of harassment and social media. Harassment between students and social media issues can lead to problems in locker rooms, buses or in parking lots during general supervision periods. This is an opportunity to share district policies and drive home the duty to supervise to coaches.

3. Selecting/Training of Coaches

Do head coaches hire their own staff? What thought goes into hiring that staff when it is so difficult to find qualified assistant coaches? Do head coaches operate like CEOs? What procedures are in place for hiring qualified and certified staff? Discuss with coaches their duty to hire properly trained assistant coaches. Drive home any state mandatory coaching accreditation requirements along with any school district requirements such as CPR Certification.

4. Technique Instruction

Related to the duty of selecting and training coaches, is the duty to provide proper technique instruction that is sport specific and using qualified instructors. Inform coaches of the importance of utilizing multiple methods of communicating proper technique. Coaches should also know that they need to thoroughly inform athletes of risks involved in participation. We live in a time when lawsuits can be filed quickly when athletes are injured. Someone must pay the medical expenses that result from injury. Lawsuits based on improper technique instruction by coaches that may have led to the injury is one way to recover those medical expenses. Use this duty to discuss policies and expectations. In the age of the smartphone, filming technique instruction can create a paper trail if injury does occur.

5. Warnings

Student-athletes must be provided warnings regarding all the risks related to participation in athletics. Warnings should be shared in a detailed, clear, concise manner through multiple types of media. Adding sport-specific cautionary forms and other measures such as warning posters and announcements can add effectiveness to the warning process and increase safety in participation while reassuring parents and staff that protections are in place.

6. Safe Playing Environment

Discuss with coaches the importance that any issues with equipment, facilities or playing surfaces should be corrected immediately and prior to any participation. Coaches should conduct these inspections prior to participation every day. Include custodial and maintenance staff in these communications and stress the importance of rectifying issues immediately. Use the duty to provide a safe playing environment to discuss policies such as lightning, other threatening weather, and heat indexes and warnings with coaches.

7. Protective Equipment

Ensure athletes wear appropriate protective equipment for the activity. Enforce consistent use of safety equipment. Remind coaches and staff to remain current with the NFHS and state regulations regarding protective equipment. Coaches, trainers and equipment managers must be knowledgeable and vigilant regarding protective equipment. Athletes must be adequately warned about the use of protective equipment in a detailed, clear and repeated manner. Use different methods of communication such as verbal reminders, written guidelines and informational posters in locker rooms.

8. Evaluating Conditioning

Evaluate athletes for initial preparedness to safely participate in a sport or activity. This is especially important in the first practices and ongoing throughout the season. Use the duty to evaluate conditioning to discuss working athletes in slowly if they have not been conditioning prior to the season.

Discuss thresholds for heat indexes and adherence to heat index guidelines and recommendations. Establish who determines measuring heat indexes and warnings and when precautions are implemented. Remind coaches to err on the side of caution and practice protective judgement when weather conditions warrant. Administrators do not get a second chance if an athlete is injured due to negligence.

Use the duty to evaluate conditioning to discuss the importance of physicals and to establish who is responsible to ensure every athlete has a valid physical or other paperwork on file prior to participation. Discuss the importance of enforcement during the summer and off-season. Discussing concussion policies and protocols under the evaluating conditioning duty is a way to ensure all coaches are aware of the seriousness of head injuries and proper processes when an athlete has a concussion.

9. Evaluating Injury

Who evaluates injuries to athletes? Who makes a judgment on whether an athlete should play? Coaches need to understand that the evaluation of injury must be conducted by medical professionals and that coaches cannot supersede the education and licensing of medical professionals. Discuss and clearly define whose role it is to make medical decisions.

10. Matching/Equating Athletes

Athletic administrators and coaches must match and equate athletes in practice and competition based on the following criteria: size, age, strength, skill level, experience and incapacitating conditions. Ensure that coaches and personnel understand what it means to match and equate athletes. Provide examples to staff of proper practice techniques and highlight examples of improper use from an individual and team perspective.

11. Medical Assistance

We have an obligation to offer medical assistance to athletes and those in our facilities. This duty can be difficult for coaches and personnel to understand after directing them not to evaluate injury past the level of their training. Discuss the difference between diagnosing and evaluating an injury or medical problem and providing first aid or life-saving techniques. Take the opportunity to discuss why they must provide immediate medical assistance. This is a great opportunity to review the locations of all AED units. Include a trainer or school nurse in this conversation and invite these professionals to coaches' meetings.

12. Emergency Response Plan

Detailed emergency response plans should be posted inside and outside of all athletic facilities. These plans should be specific to each facility as every facility has different challenges that should be addressed in each plan. Discuss this emergency response plan with all coaches and staff and review where these plans are located. Stress the importance of why coaches and staff need to know the emergency response plan for each location and conduct practice drills for staff and students.

13. Safe Transportation

Discuss the duty of safely transporting athletes to and from a sporting event. What is the school corporation policy regarding athletic transportation? Discuss transportation expectations that are in place while riding on school-provided transportation. Use this time to discuss expectations and what school corporation policy is regarding athletes riding to and from events. If policy allows for students to ride separately from district transportation, discuss how this is clearly communicated and documented.

14. Sport-Related Disclosures

Discuss with all department coaches and staff the importance of always providing factual and true information to athletes. Work with school counselors and administrators on placing athletes on the right path for course work to satisfy NCAA/NAIA college requirements for admission. Provide accurate information to athletes and parents related to registering on the NCAA/NAIA Clearinghouse. Ensure the requirement is met to disclose whether the school corporation offers medical insurance coverage or disclose if the district does not offer coverage but requires athletes to have insurance coverage prior to participation.

15. Best Practices for Preventing and Addressing Bad Acts

Always follow school corporation or district policies. Communicate policies to all stakeholders and ensure all coaches and staff are well trained. Instill strong communications habits with coaches and staff and clearly define a conduit for reporting issues. Do policies exist for self-reporting incidents? Stress the importance of listening as a habit and to pay attention to conversations and actions.

If something feels like a bad act, call the principal and superintendent immediately. A failure to notify can and will result in issues. Coach coaches and staff to respond immediately if they know of a bad act and to never wait to see if hearsay and rumor is true. Stress that they should never ignore the fringe. Small problems add up to large problems that can lead to permanent damage to a program and can harm individuals. All of these duties and best practices will serve to safeguard students, staff and ourselves!

Several obligations or duties have been identified as absolute requirements for coaches and athletic administrators. These standards have evolved as a result of various case law proceedings and legal judgments against individuals and school districts. It is important that all coaches, including assistants and volunteers, know and understand the following duties. This summary is not all-inclusive but is generally accepted as the “Legal Duties of Coaches” by the NFHS (National Federation of High Schools) and NIAAA (National Interscholastic Athletic Administrator Association).

School District #2 Policies and Procedures

Listed below are the School District #2 Policies and Procedures that are particularly relevant to coaches and activities sponsors. All coaches and sponsors are required to know and follow the policies and procedures closely. These policies are found on the BPS website under Policies and Procedures. Click on the link to be taken directly to the procedure listed.

2310-P3 – Guidelines for Movies, Videos & DVDs on Bus Trips & Other School Supervised Trips

2320 – Field Trips and Out of State Student Travel

2320-P1 – Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Travel

2332 – Religion and Religious Activities

2410-P1 – High School Graduation Requirements

3210 – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

3210-F1 – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Incident Reporting Form

3230 – Student Rights, Responsibilities, Code of Conduct

3235 – Student Drug and Chemical Use and Abuse

3410-F1 – Student-Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Concussion Statement

3431 – Emergency Treatment

4210 – School Support Organizations

4210-F1 – Fundraising Approval Request Form

4210-F2 – Fundraising Report Form

4210-P1 – Student Fundraising Activities

4210-P2 – Fundraising Activity

4210-P3 - Guidelines for Extracurricular (ECA) Funds

4311 – Complaints Against District Employees

4311-F1 – Complaint Form

5019 – School Volunteers

5021 – Fingerprints and Criminal Background Investigations

5501 – Evaluation

7320-P2 – Procurement Card Purchasing Procedure



MHSA By-Laws

The MHSA website contains the By-Laws. Excerpts from relevant portions of the By-Laws are provided here; however, the website is the source of record for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Article II, Section (1) ASSOCIATION CONTEST

1.1 The definition of an "Association Contest" is an athletic contest between teams representing two high schools, which are members of the Association involving any group of students playing under the supervision of the school**.** All rules and regulations that apply to an Association Contest shall apply to any athletic contest engaged in by a member school**.**

1.2 Any game or part of a game (scrimmage, practice, warm-up, tune-up or similar activity), in which the students participate as a representative team of their school with any other sanctioned or non-sanctioned team, shall be considered an Association contest and shall be counted as a part of the season game limit for the school's athletic classification**.**

1.3 No Association Contest may be played before the starting date of the first allowable competition in each particular sport**.**

1.4 Any member school will not be permitted to participate in any interschool athletic contest with a school, club team or other groups (teams) that are not accredited by the State Board of Public Education in the state of Montana and, hence, not eligible for membership in the MHSA, if more than two schools would be participating in the event**.** If a member school does participate in an interschool contest with a non-accredited school, club team or other groups (teams) and more than two schools are involved, the member school or schools will be subject to penalties under Article VIII**.**

1.5 If a member school wishes to invite a non-accredited school or accept an invitation from the school to participate in a two-school contest, this would not be a violation of this section.

Article II, Section (2) ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in an Association Contest, a student shall meet all of the following criteria:

2.1 A student must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance in ten hours per week at the school where the student participates. Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar).

Exception 1: Students are exempt from the ten hours per week bricks and mortar requirement of Section 2.1 if enrolled and completing personalized learning in accordance with provisions and intent of Section 20-7-1601, MCA, and consistent with policy adopted by the school district Board of Trustees. Students enrolled and competing personalized learning must participate for the district for which they are enrolled. All other eligibility requirements in this handbook apply.

Exception 2: Students enrolled and completing personalized learning in accordance with the provisions and intent of Section 20-7-1601, MCA in districts with more than one high school can participate in extracurricular activities at any high school in their district as established by school board policy. Districts that enforce attendance area restrictions may enforce those restrictions with personalized learning students. Once a student participates in any extracurricular activity in a particular school and the student changes to another school in the district, the MHSA Transfer Rule applies.

Exception 3: Non-public or home school students who meet the requirements of 20-5-109 can participate in MHSA member school extra-curricular activities with the following stipulations:

1. The same standards for participation must be met as those required of full-time students enrolled in the school (besides enrollment).

2. The same rules of the MHSA apply including age, semesters and academics (see #3).

3. The academic eligibility for extracurricular participation for a student attending a nonpublic school must be attested by the head administrator of the nonpublic school. The academic eligibility for extracurricular participation for students attending a home school must be attested in writing by the educator providing the student instruction with verification by the MHSA school principal. Academic eligibility includes provisions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

4. The student may only participate in the school in the student's attendance area and cannot transfer.

5. For a homeschool student to be able to participate in MHSA sports or activities, the student must be a United States citizen, and he/she must be a Montana resident, as determined under the provisions of MCA 1-1-215.

Exception 4: Home school or nonpublic school students who resides in a school district with more than one high school can participate in extracurricular activities at any high school in their district if approved by the school district. Districts that enforce attendance area restrictions may enforce those restrictions with home and nonpublic school students. Once a student participates in any extracurricular activity in a particular school and the homeschool or nonpublic student changes to another school in the district, the MHSA Transfer Rule applies.

2.2 A grading period is defined as one semester. A semester is defined as one half of a school year (approximately 18 school weeks or 90 school days). This definition is applicable to all schools regardless of the type of class scheduling format utilized (e.g., block, traditional, trimester, etc.).

2.3 A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared class work or its equivalent in the last previous semester, at the school where the student participates; except that any ninth-grade student enrolled and attending any junior high, in the same school system as the senior high school, may be eligible to participate on that senior high school's athletic teams. If the school prohibits participation by ninth grade students, this action by the local school will not be subject to review by the MHSA or its Executive Board.

2.4 A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared work per week or its equivalent during the last preceding semester in which he/she was enrolled.

2.5 If a student is assigned an "incomplete" or a "condition" in a subject, he/she has not received a passing grade in this subject. The record at the end of the semester is final.

2.6 In the case of two or more schools entering into a cooperative sponsorship of activities, a student enrolled as a student and otherwise satisfying eligibility requirements would be eligible to participate in any activity sponsored by the school, regardless of whether the activity is sponsored only by the school or in conjunction and cooperation with another school, without being in violation of Article II, Section 2.

2.7 No student may establish eligibility concurrently at two member schools. Dual enrollment is not recognized for the purpose of eligibility in MHSA activities. A home school or nonpublic school student who participates at a MHSA member school is not eligible to concurrently participate in the same sport/activity that he/she participates in at the member school in any other league

(nonpublic or home school). This provision protects member schools and nonpublic and home school leagues regarding dual participation.

2.8 This rule is not applicable to IDEA '04 and Section 504 students when their individual education plans (IEP) under IDEA or their educational accommodation plans under Section 504 certify that the students are not required to meet this minimum academic to have passed 20 hours of prepared work per week. However, all students must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance in ten hours per week. Special education or Section 504 certification that the student is not required to meet the minimum academic requirements may not be enacted retroactively (after grades have been assigned at the end of the previous semester).

2.9 The second semester begins on Monday morning following the week in which the first semester ends. A student who becomes eligible the second semester would then become eligible on Monday morning. A student who becomes ineligible the second semester would become ineligible on Monday morning.

2.10 A student attending a state approved Charter school approved by the Montana Board of Public Education is considered eligible for competition if the student a) is academically eligible from the previous semester, b) is enrolled and in regular attendance for twenty hours per week of approved high school classes, c) is eligible to receive a diploma from the high school for which he/she is competing, and d) the principal of the high school verifies that the student meets all other eligibility requirements such as age, semesters etc. and is in good standing. The Charter School student must participate for the district in which student's family resides.

If charter school students reside in a school district with more than one high school, they can participate in extracurricular activities at any high school in their district if approved by the school district. Districts that enforce attendance area restrictions may enforce those restrictions with charter students. Once a student participates in any extracurricular activity in a particular school, and the student changes to another school in the district, the MHSA Transfer Rule applies.

2.11 If a State of Montana statute establishes law regarding transgender participation in sports and activities, the MHSA shall adhere to and comply with such state statute.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. A student may not compete "unattached" or "independently." He/she must compete for and be eligible to represent his/her member high school.
2. Schools may be more stringent in their policies.
3. Twenty hours of prepared class work is defined as four subjects that grant one unit of credit each for the full school year, or their equivalent (e.g., three classes carrying one unit of credit for the school year and two classes carrying one-half unit of credit for the school year) or the equivalency in a block/trimester schedule would meet this requirement.
4. Only school district-approved course work can be used to compute the 20 periods of prepared work.
5. The scholastic record at the end of the semester shall be final and deficiencies may not be made up in any manner. Deficiencies, including incompletes, conditions and failures for the previous semester may not be made up during a subsequent semester, summer session, night school, correspondence, or tutoring for the purpose of establishing or maintaining MHSA eligibility.

6. The intent of the rule prohibiting incomplete grades from being made up is not to prohibit incomplete grades which were given in cases of illness, injury or attending school authorized functions.
7. A student attending an alternative school not housed within the high school is considered eligible for competition if the student a) is academically eligible from the previous semester, b) is enrolled and in regular attendance for twenty hours per week of approved high school classes, c) is eligible to receive a diploma from the high school for which he/she is competing, and d) the principal of the high school verifies that the student meets all other eligibility requirements such as age, semesters etc. and is in good standing.

Article II, Section (3) PHYSICAL EXAM

3.1 A physical examination is required for each student in order to be considered eligible and to be approved for participation in an Association Contest. Physical examinations must be completed prior to the first day of practice. This examination must be certified by a licensed medical professional acting within the scope and limitations of his/her practice. Physical examinations conducted after May 1 and thereafter are valid for the following two school years; Physical examinations conducted prior to May 1 are valid only for the remainder of that school year and the following school year. The physical examination form developed by the MHSA Medical Advisory Committee and approved by the MHSA Executive Board must be used. A current form may be obtained from the Montana High School Association. An interim history form is required during the off years when no physical examination is conducted and must be submitted to the school prior to the first practice.

The purpose of the interim medical questionnaire is to confirm that your child has not experienced any new medical issues since their last physical exam. Please document any new injuries, illnesses or conditions that may affect safe participation in athletics and notify the school of any new medications or health concerns. A parent signature attests that any medical condition or injury in the past year has been treated appropriately and has received clearance to participate in sport by a health care provider.

Article II, Section (7) AGE RULE

7.1 No student is eligible to participate in an Association contest who has become nineteen (19) years old on or before midnight, August 31, of a given year. Therefore, a student who becomes nineteen (19) years old after midnight, August 31, of a given year, will be permitted to compete in all Association contests throughout that school year, under the provisions of this section.

7.2 A student who is ineligible by reason of this age rule may seek a waiver from the MHSA under the following conditions and procedures. The student, his/her school, parent/guardian or other representative shall submit a written application for a waiver. For fall sports, the application shall be submitted by March 15th of the preceding school year so that, if necessary, the request can be considered by the Executive Board prior to summer recess. For all other sports seasons, the application shall be submitted at least 60 days prior to the first activity for which he/she seeks the waiver.

7.3 It will be the burden of the student to prove:

a. the student does not create a safety risk to other players, and
b. the student does not skew the overall competitiveness of the particular activity(ies) for which the student will participate, and
c. the student's participation will not result in the exclusion of other eligible players, and
d. the student meets all other criteria necessary for participation in MHSA activities.

7.4 The Executive Director is vested with the authority and responsibility to make the initial waiver determination. In making the initial determination, the Executive Director shall consider such evidence as is provided by the applicant; and the Executive Director may request the applicant to provide specific information or additional information; and the Executive Director or staff may make an independent investigation of the facts. The Executive Director shall then make a determination as to each activity for which a waiver is sought and notify the applicant.

7.5 Upon initial receipt of the waiver application, the request shall be scheduled for hearing before the Executive Board at the next scheduled meeting. It shall be scheduled neither sooner than 30 days nor more than 60 days from the day the application is received. If the Executive Director thereafter grants a waiver, the scheduled hearing will be vacated. If the Executive Director refuses to grant the requested waiver, then the student will be so notified and can proceed to present his waiver request to the Board. At the hearing, the Board will consider all documentary evidence previously considered by the Executive Director together with any additional evidence submitted.

Article II, Section (8) SEMESTER RULE

8.1 A student will be eligible to participate in Association Contests for four (4) consecutive years [eight (8) consecutive semesters] after entering the ninth grade. Enrollment of twenty (20) pupil instruction days during a ninth grader's first semester in high school constitutes his/her first semester of attendance. A ninth grader who is enrolled fewer than twenty (20) pupil instruction days in his/her first semester of high school does not begin his/her eight (8) consecutive semesters unless he/she has participated during this time in an Association contest. Such a period of fewer than twenty (20) pupil instruction days is not considered to be "the last previous semester attended" under Section (2).

INTERPRETATION

This rule also applies to a student who has been declared eligible under Section (5)C (Students below ninth grade). A student will be eligible to participate in Association Contests for five (5) years [ten (10) consecutive semesters] after entering the eighth grade.

Article II, Section (9) DEADLINE FOR ENROLLMENT

9.1 A student shall have been regularly enrolled in at least twenty hours of prepared class work per week and in attendance for ten hours per week no later than fifteen (15) school days after the beginning of the semester to be eligible during that semester. This rule shall not apply to transfer students who have met the attendance requirements in the school last attended. Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar).

Article II, Section (10) TRANSFER RULE

10.1 Any student, including eighth grade students allowed high school participation, who transfers from one member high school, home school, or non-member school to a member high school is ineligible to participate in a varsity Association Contest for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year of the school to which he/she transfers from the date of enrollment (first day he/she attends classes) in the school to which he/she transfers. A student and his/her parents or legal guardians must reside in the attendance area of the school in which he/she is enrolled except for a student enrolling in ninth grade for the first time (see Section (12) Record of Transfer.) This rule applies to a student who transfers after twenty (20) days of enrollment or after he/she participates in an athletic contest while enrolled in 13 grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, EXCEPT the following students may be declared eligible: Note: This rule does not apply to non-

public or home school participants. There is no out of attendance area transfers for non-public or home school participants.

a. A student who moves into a new district or school attendance area upon a corresponding change of residence by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) with whom the student was living during his/her previous school enrollment. The legal guardianship must have been established at least one calendar year before the transfer. If the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) move to a new location a student must follow within a calendar year of the move to be eligible for varsity competition after proper certification by his/her principal.
b. Students transferring from one high school to another under any bona fide foreign exchange program will be eligible for two (2) consecutive semesters of eligibility for participation in activities under the administration of any NFHS member association, after the principal properly certifies that they meet all eligibility requirements. The exchange student will not be eligible beyond these two semesters even if he/she chooses to stay at that school, transfer to a different high school or remain under a bona fide program. The student would be ineligible for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year at the school he/she attends following the two consecutive semesters of eligibility. A student who returns to the school at which he/she was enrolled directly before attending a bona fide foreign exchange program will be eligible immediately upon re-enrollment. (A student who has graduated from a high school in his/her own country and is now in the United States under a foreign exchange program would not be eligible.) Refer to Article II, Section (4).
    i. A foreign exchange student is an international student who attends high school in the U.S. To be eligible for interscholastic athletics in the U.S., such student must be under the auspices of and be placed with a U.S. host family by an international student exchange program that has been accepted for listing by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and be recognized by the U.S. Department of State. The foreign exchange program must assign students to host families by a method that ensures that no student, or his/her parents, school or other interested party may influence the assignment for athletic purposes. The foreign exchange student may not be selected or placed on any basis related to his/her athletic interests or abilities.
    ii. A foreign exchange student is considered to be placed with a host family when written notice of placement is provided by the exchange organization to the student and his/her parents, and to the host family. Neither the school the student attends nor any person associated with the school shall have input into the selection of the student.
    iii. The foreign exchange student must possess a current J-1 or F-1 visa, issued by the U.S. State Department.
    iv. The foreign exchange student must comply with all eligibility requirements set forth by the state high school association of which the school he/she attends is a member. When a foreign exchange student changes his/her attendance from one high school to another, eligibility for MHSA activities will be determined by the Executive Director after receiving a petition for Waiver of the Transfer Rule (Hardship).
c. A student who marries and establishes a new residence in a new district or school attendance area.
d. A student in attendance at a school designated by the governing body of that school as a result of reorganization, consolidation or annexation or a student ordered

transferred within a school system, for other than interscholastic competition purposes, by a board of education or the governing body of a private or parochial school system.

e. A student who moves from parent to parent or legal guardian to legal guardian the first time in his/her high school career will be eligible upon verification to the MHSA office that this is the first move and certified by the administrators involved that the move was neither athletically motivated nor was the move because of recruitment. The legal guardianship must have been established at least one calendar year before the transfer.

f. A student who transfers to another school for the primary purpose of participating in a sport(s)/activity(ies) not sanctioned by the Montana High School Association (and does not participate in an MHSA sanctioned sport at that school) and returns to the school from which he/she transferred.

g. A student who transfers from a home school to an MHSA member school in the same school district for the first time in his/her high school career and has never attended high school.

h. A student who has attended high school and resides in a district other than where the student's parent(s) resides, and who subsequently returns to live with the student's parents becomes immediately transfer eligible for varsity competition in the parent's district. This can be applied only one time during the student's career.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. Date of enrollment means the first day he/she attends classes.
2. A transfer student who changes high schools without the corresponding change of residence by parents or legal guardian (legal guardianship must be established at least one calendar year before the transfer) is eligible to compete as a member of a non-varsity team, only, if his/her school is in a contest against non-varsity teams, only, of other member schools, providing he/she meets all other eligibility requirements. No student may compete unattached or independently.

NOTE a: Athletes participating in cross-country, track and swimming will be allowed to compete in the contests where varsity and sub-varsity team members compete at the same time to conserve time and expense, but are scored separately. Example: cross-country meet where varsity and sub-varsity runners run at the same time but are identified and scored separately.

NOTE b: The following interpretations apply only to transfer students and their eligibility for varsity Association contests:

3. A change of residence is the actual physical relocation by the parents or legal guardians of a student at a new residence and termination of all occupancy of a previous residence. The change in residence must be bona fide, include other minor siblings and involve transfer from one school district attendance area to another school district attendance area. For the purpose of eligibility, there can be only one residence.
4. If a transfer student enters after the beginning of a semester, he/she will become eligible after the expiration of half the number of P.I. days in the current school year in the school he/she is now attending.
5. Guardianship is not recognized for the purpose of these rules, when either parent is living and legally competent unless such guardianship has been legally established at least one calendar year before the transfer.
6. If a family moves to a new location, a student should attend the school within the attendance area. If, however, the new home is geographically more convenient to an out of district school, attendance may be allowed, with MHSA approval, without reference to school district or county boundaries. Under these conditions a student would become

eligible as soon as his/her principal properly certifies in writing to the MHSA office that he/she is eligible. Should he/she later decide to return to his/her home school after an attendance of 20 days or more in the school away from home, he/she would be considered the same as any other transfer student and would lose one semester of eligibility.

7. For the purpose of these rules a student cannot establish a residence apart from his/her parents. If he/she habitually makes his/her home with a relative and the student changes schools because the relative changes residence, the student will lose eligibility time in accordance with the transfer rule. A student, both of whose parents are deceased and who has no legal guardian, may change high schools without loss of eligibility time. However, a student may not change school systems within a city or school district.
8. A student may enroll in a new high school in anticipation of a change of residence on the part of his/her parents. After his/her parents establish residence at the new location, he/she will become varsity eligible as soon as the principal of the school to which the student transfers properly certifies in writing to the MHSA office that he/she is eligible.
9. When two or more high schools have been established within one school system and under the administration of one board of trustees, the district shall be divided into a corresponding number of high school attendance areas. Students shall attend the high school of the designated attendance area.
10. Each year the board of trustees shall designate a school attendance area for each high school under its jurisdiction not later than the opening date set for fall sports, such boundaries must not be changed during any current school year.
11. Students transferring from one high school to another in the same school system but in a different attendance area are ineligible for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year after enrollment, unless there is a bona fide corresponding change of residence on the part of the parents(s) or legal guardian (legal guardianship must be established one calendar year before the transfer) from the previous attendance area to the present attendance area.
12. A student who enrolls at MSDB for the first time may become eligible after the principal certifies that the student meets all eligibility requirements.
13. A student attending an alternative school not housed within the high school is considered eligible for competition if the student resides in the attendance area of the high school for which he/she competes and if all other eligibility requirements are met.
14. A student who has transferred from a MHSA member school to home school and then back to the member school is ineligible for varsity competition for half the number of P.I. days in the current school year after enrollment.

10.2 Transfers from one school system to another within the same city or town: In the cities or towns which have more than one high school system (e.g., both a public high school and a private high school), a student must complete half the number of P.I. days in the current school year of attendance before being eligible when transferring from one high school system to another within such city or town, even though the parents or legal guardian with whom the student has been living during the period of his/her last high school enrollment moved into the immediate vicinity of the new school.

INTERPRETATION

MHSA Private Schools Defined Attendance Areas

- Butte Central -- Butte City Limits
- Billings Central -- Billings City Limits
- St. Labre -- Ashland City Limits
- Loyola Sacred Heart -- Missoula City Limits
- Lustre Christian -- Frazer City Limits
- Northern Cheyenne -- Busby City Limits

- Great Falls Central -- Great Falls City Limits
- Manhattan Christian -- Manhattan HS Attendance Area
- Valley Christian -- Missoula City Limits
- Two Eagle River -- Pablo City Limits

10.3 Hardship Rule: A high school student who, because of circumstances beyond his/her control such as broken home conditions, death of parents or guardian, abandonment or other exceptional circumstances, finds it necessary to change high schools may be declared eligible by the Executive Director provided the principal of each high school involved files a statement with the Executive Director that the change was necessary, was not athletically motivated, and there was no known undue influence. If the transfer of any student from one school to another is approved by the Executive Director under the foregoing circumstances, he/she shall be eligible provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements. Appeals on Petitions for Waiver of the Transfer Rule under the Hardship Rule shall be acted upon by the MHSA Executive Board at any regular or special meeting, including conference phone calls, provided the school or individual requesting, agrees to pay the cost of the call. The official MHSA waiver form must be used.

Article II, Section (12) RECORD OF TRANSFER

A student received by transfer shall not be eligible to participate in an Association Contest until the principal of the school shall have filed with the Executive Director of the Association a record of the transfer on the official MHSA transfer form. This section does not relieve the student from eligibility requirements arising from his/her change of high schools.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. Any student enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in high school is not considered a transfer student except under the following conditions:
    a. The student competed as an eighth grader at the high school level.
    b. A ninth-grade student or as an eighth grader competed in a high school contest, has been enrolled in another school for 20 school days or more.
    c. A ninth-grade student or as an eighth grader, has been enrolled in another school for fewer than 20 days but has participated in a high school interschool athletic contest.
2. Any student enrolling in the tenth grade directly from the ninth grade from a junior high school in the same school system is not to be considered a transfer student under this Section.

Article II, Section (14) PENALTY FOR A PLAYER ASSAULTING AN OFFICIAL

14.1 Any athlete who makes physical contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the sports official or causes reasonable apprehension of bodily injury to the sports official in connection with an Association Contest shall immediately become ineligible for further interscholastic competition. It shall be the responsibility of the tournament manager or principal of the school hosting the event to notify as soon as possible the Executive Director or a member of the Executive Board of the incident. The official involved must report the incident in writing to the MHSA office within three days of its occurrence.

14.2 The coach of the student involved is responsible for keeping that student from further interscholastic participation, pending a ruling by the Executive Board of the MHSA. The Executive Board shall have the power to suspend the violating participant from further

interscholastic competition for a period not to exceed two semesters from the date of the infraction.

Article II, Section (15) AWARD RULE

15.1 A student participant may not accept monetary compensation (cash) in recognition of activities performance, participation and/or achievement. A student may accept non-monetary compensation or items of value solely in recognition of activities ability, participation and/or achievement if the total value of such non-monetary compensation or items of value, including the actual value of any gift certificates (so long as they are not convertible to cash), discounts, coupons, etc., does not exceed $500 retail value annually (July 1 – June 30).

NOTE: For the purposes of this rule, "non-monetary compensation or items of value" does not include customary awards of a symbolic nature without resale value such as:
A. The school's athletic letter, medals, ribbons, certificates, plaques, trophies, and other emblems.
B. The award is purchased and presented by the student's parents or when the award is purchased by the student with money earned or secured through his/her own individual efforts.
C. MHSA Sportsmanship Awards

NOTE: For the purposes of this rule, these items which have been a part of the previous awards rule would be included in the "non-monetary compensation or items of value":
A. Training apparel for practice and/or workouts provided by the school. These items include but are not limited to the following: practice shirt, practice shorts, spandex, tights and a pair of socks.
B. Schools may provide warm-up shirts (e.g. shooting shirts) to be worn on the court/field before a contest.
C. Fundraising activities such as pop hoop shoots, passing accuracy contests etc.
D. Individual miniature trophies for first and second place MHSA state championship events purchased from the Association's awards provider.

15.2 This rule does not regulate or prohibit compensation received by a student for ability, participation and/or achievement in a non-MHSA sport or activity, nor does this rule prohibit the acceptance of college scholarships by students.

15.3 A coach or director is responsible for reporting to the school's athletic/activities director all compensation or items of value received by the students on that coach/director's team within one month of the receipt of the compensation or items of value. Principals are responsible for verifying to the association, if requested, that the total sum of compensation or items of value received by each student participant at that school does not exceed $500 retail value for each participant.

15.4 A student participating without compensation as a contestant, coach, or similar participant in athletic or other activities may accept the use of necessary equipment and incidental services customarily furnished amateur participants in such activities, may accept reimbursement for direct and necessary expenses for participation (including mileage where the student must drive), and where participation requires absence from home, may accept necessary meals and lodging

15.5 When a student is selected by chance or random drawing, to participate in a halftime or pregame contest involving a sport skill (e.g. throwing, kicking, or shooting a basketball), he or she may receive cash or merchandise prize from the contest, without affecting eligibility under MHSA Awards and Amateur rules.

Random drawing of names or lucky numbers in a program determining the participant would not be a violation. Examples include, but are not limited to, booster club fundraisers, drawings to shoot a half-court or three point shot, or passing a football to win a prize. During the season of activity, a player from a school team is permitted to participate in such contests, provided the selection occurs randomly.

15.6 A student becomes ineligible from the date of the report of the violation to the MHSA office. Penalties for the awards rule apply when:

A. Any type of cash is accepted.
B. A student is awarded non-monetary compensation or items of value over $500 annually (July 1 – June 30).
C. The MHSA Ridgeway Settlement Agreement is not followed by schools.

The Executive Board will follow the same procedure for restoring the eligibility status as provided in the last paragraph of the Amateur Rule, Article II, Section (19) of the By-Laws

Article II, Section (16) AMATEUR RULE

16.1 All contestants in the Montana High School Association must be amateurs. An amateur is one who engages in athletics for the educational, physical, mental and social benefits he/she derives therefrom, and to whom athletics are nothing more than an avocation. An athlete forfeits amateur status in a sport by:

A. Competing for or accepting money or other monetary compensation (it is permissible for a student to accept necessary meals, lodging, and transportation in connection with playing a contest).
B. Play or manage under an assumed name
C. Receiving any award or prize of monetary value which exceeds the amount that has been approved by the MHSA.
D. Except as provided under By-Law 16.2, permitting the use of name, image, and/or likeness (NIL) as an athlete, in the promotion of a commercial or profit-making event, item, plan, or service.
E. A student who becomes a professional in an MHSA sponsored sport is considered a professional in that sport only and is ineligible for further high school athletic competition in that sport only until such time as returned to amateur status in that sport
F. Sell a prize won in a competition
G. Bet on a contest in which he/she is to participate.

16.2 Under By-law 16.1d, the term “commercial or profit-making event, item, plan, or service” means any situation in which the person or entity will receive or hopes to receive anything of value, monetary or non-monetary, but does not include student participation in fundraising activities for non-profit organizations. This also does not prohibit a student from participating in any such event, item, plan, or services sponsored by or benefiting the student’s MHSA member school or its activities.

Under By-law 16.1d, the term “as an athlete” shall not include use of the name, image, or likeness of a student of a MHSA member school participating in MHSA-sponsored activities,

unless otherwise explicitly permitted or prohibited by state or federal law or the MHSA member school's policies or rules, within the following limitations:

A . Students may engage in name, image and/or likeness (NIL) activities subject to the following:

1. The student's NIL activities may NOT include an image or likeness of the student in uniform or other clothing or gear provided by the MHSA or the member school the student is attending or has attended.

2. The student shall not use any MHSA or the member school's facilities, proprietary patents, products, copyrights, and/or equipment for the purpose of any NIL activities

3. The student shall not use any MHSA or the member school's practice and/or game film for the purpose of any NIL activities

4. The student shall not promote any person or entity, or their services and/or products, during the MHSA member school's scheduled school day or during any team activities.

5. When required to follow the MHSA or MHSA member school's uniform or dress requirements, the student may not wear any person's or entity's logo, mark, or insignia, or in any other way represent the person or entity with which the student has agreed to an NIL activity.

6. No compensation (or prospective compensation) for the NIL activity may be provided by the MHSA member school, an agent of the member school (e.g., school booster club, foundation, employee, etc.), a collective or anyone affiliated with the member school in any way attempting to induce the student to attend or participate in any activity of a MHSA member school.

7. The student shall not promote activities, services, or products, directly or in any way associated with, but not limited to:

i. Alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, or vaping.

ii. Controlled substances, including illegal drugs (such as cannabis) or any paraphernalia

iii. Any item, activity, or conduct which is prohibited or unlawful for any school-aged student under state or federal law or the policies of the MHSA or the MHSA member school.

iv. Gambling of any kind, including sports betting, lottery, or other, even if the entity for whom the student has agreed to engage in NIL activities has the appropriate permits or licenses as required by law.

B. Violation of by-law 16.2 may result in a determination by the member school and the MHSA of the student's ineligibility for activity participation. Compliance with these rules does not guarantee the student's NIL activity or activities comply with other laws or rules which may affect the student, such as rules established by the NCAA, NAIA, or NJCAA. Students and their parents or guardians are strongly encouraged to contact any such organization which may have separate rules and to consult with their own legal counsel regarding any compliance questions or concerns, including review of any contracts or agreements related to NIL activities of any kind. The MHSA and its staff will consult with MHSA member schools, parents/guardians, and/or students who have questions about the MHSA-specific NIL rules but will not offer advisory opinions that are binding on the MHSA, its staff, or its Board of Directors, and will not review contracts or agreements relating to NIL activities.

16.3 Accepting a nominal standards fee or salary for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation or playground activities shall not jeopardize amateur standards.

16.4 A student may be reinstated as an amateur by the Executive Board after not less than one calendar year has elapsed since the date he/she was declared a professional, provided his/her high school principal requests in writing the reinstatement as an amateur and certifies that the student has not, during that one year period, violated the rules of amateurism, and that the student is not now under contract to, or owned by, any professional athletic organization.

INTERPRETATION

A student athlete may :
1. Work in camps where he/she is not participating as a "camper", fulfilling duties that include some officiating, coaching and instructing.
2. Be employed in the intramural sports program of his/her school in which duties include officiating intramural contests for the going rate for such employment.
3. Participate as an individual or as a member of a team against professional athletes, but the student athlete may not participate on a professional team.
4. Participate and/or work in summer athletic camps, but any awards accepted must not be in conflict with the awards rule.
5. Participate in sports during the summer or during a season when the player is not a member of a regular high school team, providing monetary compensation is not received for services.

Article II, Section (17) RECRUITING PROHIBITED

17.1 Schools, or any employee, representative, club, or other person or entity associated with that school, are prohibited from engaging in any activity intended to induce a student (either directly or through the parents or guardians of the student) to remain at his/her current school or transfer to another school for reasons relating to athletic participation.

17.2 Neither may a school condone, acquiesce to, or otherwise knowingly allow persons not directly associated with the school to engage in the same type of conduct.

17.3 Violations of this rule may subject the student involved to be declared ineligible from the date of the infraction and if the school is found guilty, the head coach of the sport/activity that the violation occurred shall be suspended for a minimum of two (2) regularly scheduled varsity competitions following the Executive Board hearing along with other penalties the Board deems appropriate as set forth in Article VIII, section (2).

17.4 The Executive Director may, in lieu of immediate hearing, request affidavits or other documentation relative to charges of undue influence. Following a decision by the Executive Director, the issue may be appealed to the Executive Board.

Article VIII, Section (2) GENERAL PENALTIES

For violation of any rule or regulation (other than participation of an ineligible student or other rule where a penalty is specifically provided for) by any member school, the Board may impose a private reprimand, a public reprimand, probation, suspension, and payment of a fine as set forth hereafter.

2.1 Private Reprimand. A private reprimand is written notification that a violation, or an inexcusable or unethical action, has occurred, is a matter of record, and that such an action must not be repeated. A fine not exceeding $100.00 may be imposed in conjunction therewith.

2.2 Public Reprimand. A public reprimand is written notification similar to private reprimand except that it shall be disseminated to such other schools as the Board may direct. A fine not exceeding $200.00 may be imposed in conjunction therewith. The offending school shall be given a copy of the proposed reprimand 15 days prior to its dissemination so that it may have an opportunity to appeal the sanction prior to its dissemination.

2.3 Probation. Probation is a more severe penalty and may be imposed in either of the following two ways:

a. A school on probation is on conditional Association membership, but may engage in its regular schedule, sanctioned events, and post season play provided the school files with the Association a program indicating the measures it will take to alleviate the problem which caused it to be placed on probation. A fine of not more than $400.00 may be imposed in conjunction therewith.
b. A school on strong probation may be required to forfeit all regular season contests during the time of probation and/or it may be prohibited from participating in post season play. No fine shall be imposed in conjunction therewith.

The probation shall be for a term not exceeding one year. The Board may terminate the probation prior to the expiration of the term.

2.4 Suspension. A school suspended from Association membership cannot meet in interscholastic competition of any kind with a member of the Association. Suspensions may be imposed for a term not exceeding one year. No fine shall be imposed in conjunction therewith.

2.5 Forfeiture. In addition to the other penalties imposed, the Board may direct that any awards, honors, or contests (past or future) be forfeited if it determines the violation of any By-Law, regulation or rule of the Association gave (or will give) a competitive advantage to the individual or team.

2.6 If a school is found guilty, the head coach of the sport/activity that the violation occurred shall be suspended for a minimum of two (2) regularly scheduled varsity competitions following the Executive Board hearing along with other penalties the Board deems appropriate as set forth in Article VIII, section (2).

2.7 Ejections. Any student or coach who represents a school holding membership in the MHSA who is ejected from an interscholastic athletic competition for unsportsmanlike conduct involving schools which are members of the MHSA will not participate for the remainder of the event and will be suspended for the next regularly scheduled or rescheduled event at that level of competition and all other games/meets in the interim at any level of competition. A student cannot be in uniform while suspended.

In post season tournament wrestling the next event is defined as the next session or round depending on tournament format for coaches; and for students the appropriate post season NFHS rules will be applied.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. A coach/student who is ejected from a regular season contested event in wrestling is suspended from the next regularly scheduled contested event.
2. A coach/student who is ejected from the last contested event of the regular wrestling season is suspended from the first round of the post season tournament (divisional or seeding). If a wrestler would have had a bye in the first round, it must be scored as a forfeit and the wrestler must move to the consolation bracket.

A second violation will result in a four-competition suspension in that sport by the offending student/coach.

If penalties are imposed at the end of the sport season and no contests remain, the penalty is imposed the first contests in that particular sport in the next school year. In the case of a senior student, the penalty will continue to the next MHSA sponsored sport or activity.

A third violation will result in the student being suspended for the remainder of that sport season and for an additional ninety (90) P.I. days from the date of the championship event of that classification. If a coach is ejected from the last scheduled season game, the coach must miss the next highest contest where there are regular duties to perform.

If a head coach is ejected, an assistant coach or any other school district personnel authorized to supervise students may assume the head coaching responsibilities for the remainder of the contest. If no other authorized school district personnel are on site, the contest will be terminated and a forfeiture declared. Appeal: The president of the conference may appoint a hearing officer/ board to hear any appeals, within 48 hours of the receipt of a complete report of the incident. Appeals may not deal with decisions made by contest officials.

INTERPRETATION

An ejection of a coach at a wrestling divisional or seeding tournament results in a suspension from the first session at the state wrestling tournament. An ejection of a student at a wrestling divisional or seeding tournament results in suspension from the state tournament (by NFHS rule).

MHSA Rules and Regulations

The MHSA website contains the Rules and Regulations. Excerpts from relevant portions of the Rules and Regulations are provided here; however, the website is the source of record for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Section (6) MHSA JEWELRY POLICY

A. Jewelry can be worn if allowed by NFHS rules or the governing body for the sport (USGA or USTA).

B. To request a waiver for a Daith Piercing the following criteria must be met:
   1. The piercing must be medically indicated. A note from a neurologist or primary care provider I required.
   2. Executive Director will consult with Chief Medical Advisor.
   3. ED and CMA will take the individual's sport(s) under consideration in regard to risk of injury to self and to others.
   4. One of the following recommendations will be made:
      a. Piercing will be allowed
      b. Piercing allowed with a "soft" material in place of a metal device (if individual states he/she cannot replace the metal with a soft material, ED and CMA will re-evaluate as in # 3 and issue a decision.
      c. No piercing allowed.

C. Wearable technology is allowed, as long as the device does not allow a team, a participant, and/or a coach to gain a competitive advantage during the MHSA contest. The device must not create a safety risk to the participant or their competitor(s). Schools must have approval from the Executive Director of the Montana High School Association before any use of the technology in an association contest.

Section (7) COACHING/PRACTICE REGULATIONS

Introductory Note: The intent of having rules and regulations which govern coaching and practice sessions are:

- To afford all students the same and equal opportunity for development of skills. To provide an equity basis for all team competition.
- To provide the opportunity for students to experience diversified activities exposure of their choice.
- To allow students to choose their own out of season activities.

A. Only students who meet all MHSA eligibility requirements (enrollment, age, semesters, academics, physical examinations, etc.) are eligible to practice with and participate on member school teams.
   Exception: students who are eligible in every way except academics may participate in practice if the school allows.
   Exception – For incoming freshman (graduated eighth graders) from the high school's feeder school can practice with that high school's team during the summer coaching period.
   Also, for incoming freshman, enrollment into an MHSA high school will occur after the following:
      a. the student completes eighth grade
      b. the parent(s) complete registration at the student's selected school
      c. the parent(s) paid the applicable tuition charge
      d. the parent(s) complete a request that cumulative school records be sent to the high school.

Upon completion of these four criteria, incoming freshman students are eligible to participate in the open team coaching period for that high school during the summer coaching period.

B. Regular season practice is defined as a potential player(s) reporting to the practice field or court, with or without uniforms, under the supervision of a sport-specific school-approved coach, and receiving coaching in game skills and techniques. The following are recommended pre-season and regular season practice guidelines:
    1. If a practice lasts two hours or less the athlete must have two hours of rest between practices.
    2. If a practice is more than two hours the athlete must have three hours of rest between practices.
    3. Practices should last a maximum of 2 1/2 hours in length, but if a team chooses to have one practice per day that practice shall be no longer than three hours in length.
    4. There should be no more than five hours of practice per day.

C. All participants in MHSA individual sports (cross-country, golf, swimming, tennis and track and field) will be allowed to practice with either gender during MHSA practices.

    For wrestling, if a school district adopts a policy addressing circumstances under which a female wrestler may practice with or prepare for meets with participants on the boys' team, the girls will be allowed to wrestle boys from the same school in practice and warm-ups. The policy must be aligned with an objective of providing equitable opportunities for participation that assure safety of and meet the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex in any extracurricular activity. Schools must use the following criteria in allowing this option:

    1. A parent of any participant must be allowed to opt their child out of any practice or preparation for an extracurricular activity with participants of the opposite sex.

D. Athletes participating on teams competing in MHSA post season play, which overlaps the beginning of the next MHSA sanctioned activity starting practice date, may be credited for practices during the overlap period toward meeting the minimum practice requirement of the overlapped activity season.

E. Open Gym/Field for MHSA sanctioned sports is an arrangement whereby the school's facilities are scheduled for volunteer play for all the currently enrolled student body or non-secondary students within the school's attendance area who are not enrolled in another district. Open Gym/Field are not covered by any MHSA insurance (liability, catastrophic, concussion, etc.).

INTERPRETATIONS

Open gyms do not violate MHSA rules if they are conducted according to the following guidelines:

1. The open gym is open to any currently enrolled student body or nonsecondary students within the school's attendance area who are not enrolled in another district who are interested in attending.

2. One on one instruction will be allowed at open gyms as long as it is separate from the group activity. There is NO other instruction allowed during the open gym, whether by a coach or anyone else.

3. Coaches may supervise open gyms, but they cannot instruct more than one individual at a time, organize drills, etc. or participate with the students.

4. There is no organized competition, such as established teams participating in round-robin competition, etc.

There is no such thing as an open gym during a sport-specific season (i.e. no volleyball open gym during volleyball). During the summer coaching period, only the current student body or non-secondary students within the school's attendance area (who are not enrolled in another district) are allowed to participate in open gyms or practices. Coaches who coach AAU clubs or teams with mixed high school students must follow district policy to rent the gym to practice.

F. Individual Instruction (coaching) is acceptable out of season on a one-to-one basis, e.g., one athlete per coach(es). This means that one or more coaches could instruct one athlete but two or more coaches could not coach two or more athletes. This rule does not provide the coach, or any coach on that school's high school coaching staff, the opportunity to coach his/her athlete in any out of season competition.

G. Required Instruction on a one-to-one basis out of season cannot be required of any student. The intent of allowing one on one instruction is to provide the opportunity for a student to improve his/her skills if he/she requests assistance.

H. Coaching Rules:
Summer Coaching Period: The MHSA defines the timeframe for the summer coaching period as the Tuesday after Memorial Day until July 31st.

1. The team coaching rule is suspended from the Tuesday after Memorial Day through July 31st. The team coaching rule for MHSA Baseball coaches is suspended from the ` after the State Baseball Tournament through July 31st. This means a coach of a team sport can coach his/her players anytime, anywhere, during this period. During this period a team can scrimmage against another team without violating the out-of-season contest requirements (renting facility etc.). Practice, competition and facility use during the coaching rule suspension are not covered by MHSA insurance (liability, catastrophic, concussion etc.).

A. All currently enrolled student body or nonsecondary students within the school's attendance area who are not enrolled in another district and attends the high school's feeder school can practice/compete with that high school's team during the summer coaching period.

B. For out of district transfers, participation for a MHSA high school will occur after the following:

1. The student must finish the current school year.
2. The parent(s) complete registration at the student's selected school.
3. The parent(s) paid the applicable tuition charge.
4. The parent(s) complete a request that cumulative school records be sent to the high school.

Upon completion of these four criteria, students are eligible to participate in the open team coaching 25 period for that high school during the summer coaching period.

2. The team coaching rule is in effect from August 1 - Memorial Day. The team coaching rule for MHSA Baseball coaches is in effect from August 1 - the Saturday of the MHSA State Baseball Tournament. This means that there is to be no coaching of one's team sport (team sports being baseball, football, basketball, volleyball, softball and soccer) out of season other than the one-onone provision allowed presently. Coaches of individual sports (individual sports being cross country, wrestling, track and field, swimming, golf and tennis) are not affected by this rule.

3. Students cannot be required to attend out-of-season practices, camps or contests.

4. A coach coaching a team during the summer that advances to a regional or national event can continue to coach after July 31st until the competition is ended. The MHSA office must be notified if this occurs

I. Approved co-op students are allowed to participate in each school's open gyms, practices or summer coaching period activities.

INTERPRETATIONS

In order to prevent member schools from observing the "letter" of the law but not the "spirit" or, on the other hand, to prevent a situation where coaches hesitate to even talk about wrestling, football, volleyball, basketball or softball outside the season, the following interpretations are given:

1. The coaching and team participation rules do not apply to the coaches of individual sports (individual sports being cross country, wrestling, track/field, swimming, golf and tennis). However schools should remember that they may not sponsor interschool contests or competitions out of season in team or individual sports.
2. Setting up special classes and teaching students the fundamentals, skills or plays outside the season. VIOLATION.
3. Playing touch football or flash ball in classes outside of football season. NO VIOLATION.
4. A small group of potential players shooting baskets or passing a football around outside regular season on the school grounds or at home, during noon hour or recess periods. NO VIOLATION.
5. Class basketball tournaments conducted just before or just after regular basketball season in which no coaching by any member of the staff is involved. NO VIOLATION.
6. Issuing copies of a sports playbook. NO VIOLATION.
7. Issuing football equipment to prospective squad members before seasons opens. NO VIOLATION. (Possibly equipment should not be allowed to be issued until the opening day set for football practice.

J. Olympic Development Programs: The team coaching rule can be suspended for involvement with U.S. Olympic Development Programs. Approval must be requested from the Executive Director of the Montana High School Association.

Section (9) SPECIALIZED CAMP RULE, INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENTS & OTHER EVENTS

Any student enrolled in a school holding membership in the MHSA shall be allowed to participate in specialized camps, invitational tournaments and other events in all sports so long as the program and the student's participation meet the following requirements: (This includes all 9th grade students who are currently enrolled in a junior high school in the same school district as an MHSA member high school).

A. No student shall participate in a specialized sports camp, invitational tournament or other sporting events in which any of his/her coaches are involved except during the summer coaching period of each calendar year. (This rule does not apply to individual sports.)
B. If a coach employed by the school or a coach who volunteers in the school's athletic program conducts a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event independent of the school district and uses school district facility(ies), the coach must follow the district policy on facility use including paying the normal rental fee.

C. An MHSA member school, its booster club or other school-related group may not sponsor or have any part in any way in financing a specialized camp, invitational tournament or any other event. A school, booster club or other school-related group paying a coach for conducting a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event would be in violation.

D. The MHSA Award Rule and the MHSA Amateur Rule must be followed.

INTERPRETATIONS

1. Provided a student's coach(es) are not involved and the school/booster club is not, in any way, sponsoring a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event and provided the general rules are met, a student may a attend a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event at any time during the year.
2. Schools and booster clubs cannot sponsor, supplement or underwrite a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event.
3. Coaching staffs (head, assistant or volunteer coaches) of member schools cannot be involved unless the event is taking place during the summer coaching period.
4. The amateur rule must be followed. Athletes can only receive actual expenses (hotel, travel, meals etc.) from an outside source (i.e. parent fundraiser, local business, private donor), and the school and booster club cannot cover expenses in any way. Expense records, receipts and other documentation should be kept by the sponsoring groups or individuals.
5. Schools cannot manage or house accounts and/or funds that are used in any way for specialized camps, invitational tournaments or other events.
6. A student involved in a specialized camp, invitational tournament or other defined event cannot receive anything over $100 in value for participating in the event, and no cash can be awarded.
7. School uniforms/equipment may be used, if the school allows.
8. MHSA insurance does not cover any specialized camp, invitational tournament or other event.

Section (10) VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS/AWARENESS EVENTS/RAFFLES

The soliciting of voluntary contributions is prohibited at any Association contest. Special awareness events (i.e., Pink Week) are restricted to one week of the regular season, approval for which must be obtained from the appropriate MHSA staff liaison prior to the event. This includes promotions, announcements, introductions, uniform deviations, and other variation of expected local game protocol.

Unless approved by the MHSA Executive Board, raffles or similar fundraising events, including any type of awareness event, are prohibited at playoffs, championship games, post-season tournaments, post-season meets, and/or post-season festivals which are under the direct supervision of the Montana High School Association Executive Board. The concession rights for any state tournament must be approved by the Executive Director. At district and divisional events, concessions where goods and/or services are received would be at the approval of managers of events in accordance with the district and/or divisional policies.

Section (12) CONTESTS PROHIBITED

A. The Association prohibits all interscholastic contests by member schools between December 24 and January 1 of any school year, both dates inclusive.

B. The Association prohibits Cultural Exchange Programs' athletes participating against member school teams during their specific season. Cultural exchange competition is allowed out of season for each sport, provided MHSA coaching/practice regulations are met. This restriction does not affect individuals approved to participate on member high school teams from a CSIET-approved Foreign Exchange Program.

Section (33) SPORTSMANSHIP GUIDELINES

A. Statement of philosophy: The Montana High School Association has established policies, expectations, and responsibilities which will cultivate the ideals of good sportsmanship. It shall be the responsibility of each member school to ensure that all individuals employed or directly associated with the inter-scholastic program conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner.

   The coach represents the school at interscholastic athletic activities. It is the responsibility of the head and assistant coaches to serve as role models for students and the public.

B. Code of Conduct: A coach will be in violation of the standards for good sportsmanship established by the Montana High School Association by:

   1. Making degrading/critical remarks about officials during or after a contest either at the competition site, from the bench, in the locker area, or through any public news media;
   2. Arguing with officials or going through motions indicating dislike/disdain for a decision;
   3. Detaining the officials following a contest to request or argue a ruling or explanation of actions by the official;
   4. Being ejected from a contest;
   5. Physically assaulting an official.

The MHSA website contains information pertaining to band, chorus, and orchestra. Excerpts from relevant portions of the Music Booklet are provided here; however, the website is the source of record for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

All-State, District, and State Music Festival Student Conduct Code

1. Students are expected to be model citizens at all times while attending MHSA music events. Superior, attentive conduct is mandatory at all festival events and/or rehearsals. Full cooperation with festival management and personnel is essential to the success of each festival.
2. Illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco in any form at any time will result in the students' immediate exclusion from an MHSA festival.
3. Students are to act courteously and dress appropriately in all festival locations. Through their behavior students are to show respect for all people, property, facilities and rules.
4. Students' local school rules and regulations will also apply at every MHSA festival.
5. All music must be thoroughly prepared by the accepted student and school instructor in advance of All-State rehearsals. This is the minimum standard of integrity acceptable at any MHSA All-State music festival.
6. Students must be in place and ready to rehearse prior to the beginning of every All-State rehearsal session.
7. For student safety and All-State security, all members of All-State ensembles are required to wear All-State identification badges at all All-State events.
8. Cell phone communication of any type during rehearsal or performance is strictly forbidden.
9. Students should approach festivals with focus on improvement of musical skills, not ratings.

The Festival Manager has the authority to remove a student from the festival for failure to abide by this code and a letter will be sent to the director and school administration.

Note: MHSA member schools are responsible for supervision of students and music activities. Failure to adhere to the conduct codes approved by the Music Committee and the Executive Board will render the schools subject to general penalties as defined in the MHSA Handbook.

MUSIC I. ORGANIZATION/GOVERNANCE

1. District Music Festivals, State Solo and Ensemble Festivals, and the All-State Festival fall under the jurisdiction of the general governing guidelines of the MHSA activities as stated in the complete edition of the MHSA Handbook. Please refer to Section XI of these Music Rules and Regulations for other activities.
2. Standing rules are formulated by the Music Committee and the Executive Board to ensure uniformity at MHSA music events. The Music Committee meets twice annually for this purpose (in the fall and at the MHSA annual meeting). All rules receive final approval from the Executive Board.
3. The music teacher is the official representative of the school at interscholastic music events. Music teachers must conduct themselves in a professional manner that will serve as a positive role model for students and the public.

   A music teacher will be in violation of this policy by making degrading/critical remarks or verbally assaulting adjudicators or festival management during or after a festival event, or by knowingly interfering with schedules, adjudicators' duties, or the management or intent of the festival.

   Festival chair(s) should report conduct in violation of this policy to the administrator of the host school who will in turn notify the MHSA office. A letter of reprimand will be sent from the MHSA office to the teacher in violation of the policy and his/her administrator.
4. There are eleven music festival districts and two state festival areas. Schools which desire to be permanently assigned to a different festival district or state area may petition the MHSA Executive Board by November 1 of any school year for such permission. Petitions must be in writing and must state specific reasons for requesting the change. If the petition is granted, the change will be effective for the next school year.
5. District and state music festivals must finance themselves. Should there be a deficit, it will be borne by the participating schools. Should there be any net proceeds, they will remain in the respective district treasury for use in conducting future festivals. The festival chair(s) in charge will have the responsibility of determining a reasonable method of liquidating any and all deficits. Festival chair(s) will be responsible for furnishing a complete financial report and audit of the district finances, (MHSA Form 11 — Music Festival Financial Report) to the Executive Director of the Montana High School Association, within thirty (30) days after the close of the district and state festivals. Copies of the festival report, adjudicator report and festival entries shall be distributed to all principals and participating *schools* of the district by the district organizing chair(s).
6. When participating in any activity where school musical groups or students are involved, (pep bands, tours, invitational festivals, contests etc.) local school administrators are to be held responsible for assuring the MHSA office that participation in the district music festival by all curricular/credit-bearing performing groups of that school for the year has been or will be a fact. A student must be approved.
7. The MHSA music committee requires all music teachers, festival managers and administrators who oversee their school's music program to complete the Understanding Copyright and Compliance online course available at nfhslearn.com. Each individual would be required to complete the course once during their high school tenure.
8. MHSA membership schools are required to have all circular performing ensembles adjudicated at district music festival.

Individual students' eligibility requirements do not apply to the circular performing ensembles.

II. ELIGIBILITY

1. Only high school students from member schools of the Montana High School Association may take part in the district music festival. There is an exception for grade school students through grade eight of the same school system that are regular members of the high school curricular performing groups. *Note: This rule does not apply to non-public or home school participants. Non-public or home school participants are eligible to participate, with the school, if they have met the requirements of 20-5-109 (see (2).*

   Grade school students through grade eight of the same school system may be permitted to participate in high school band, orchestra, chorus, or other instrumental or vocal ensembles without affecting their eligibility after they become high school students. However, students below the ninth grade may not participate at the state level. These students may be permitted to participate in high school band, orchestra, chorus, or instrumental/vocal ensembles at the district level. A county high school and a public elementary school in the same city shall be considered parts of the same school system.

   Exception: Eighth grade students who participate regularly in a curricular ensemble, perform at the district festival and earn a Superior rating would be eligible to participate at State if they meet general eligibility requirements, no parts are doubled in the ensemble, and they comprise one-quarter (1/4) or less of the ensemble members. Permission for eighth grade participation must be requested by the school and authorization granted by the MHSA Executive Director. Requests must be made and approved prior to the District Music Festival.

2. In order for a student to be eligible to represent his/her member school in any MHSA music activity (such as District festival, State festival, All-State Band/Choir/Orchestra), he/she must meet the following criteria:
   a. A student must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance ten hours per week at the school where the student participates. Regular attendance is defined as actual physical presence in the building (bricks and mortar).

      Exception: Students who are enrolled and participating in a transformational learning program in their school that meets a district's proficiency-based learning requirements pursuant to the adopted policies of the local school board is exempt from the ten hours per week bricks and mortar requirement.

      Exception: Non-public or home school students who meet the requirements of 20-5-109 can participate in MHSA member school extra-curricular activities with the following stipulations:
      i. The same standards for participation must be met as those required of full-time students enrolled in the school (besides enrollment).
      ii. The same rules of the MHSA apply including age, semesters and academics (see #3).
      iii. The academic eligibility for extracurricular participation for a student attending a nonpublic school must be attested by the head administrator of the nonpublic school. The academic eligibility for extracurricular participation for students attending a home school must be attested in writing by the educator providing the student instruction with verification by the MHSA school principal. Academic eligibility includes provisions 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 on page 11 if the MHSA Handbook.

iv. The student may only participate in the school in the student's attendance area and cannot transfer.
Exception – Home school or nonpublic school students who reside in a school district with more than one high school can participate in extracurricular activities at any high school in their district if approved by the school district. Districts that enforce attendance area restrictions may enforce those restrictions with home and nonpublic school students. Once a student participates in any extracurricular activity in a particular school, that is the only school that student may participate at during the student's high school activities career. There is no transfer in district after the initial approval.

b. A student: 1) must not be a graduate of a four-year high school or of a secondary school with similar graduation requirements, 2) must not have earned enough credits to have graduated and completed eight semesters of high school, and 3) must not have a GED.

c. No student may establish eligibility concurrently at two member schools. Dual enrollment is not recognized for the purpose of eligibility in MHSA activities.

3. In order for a student to be eligible to represent his/her member school in an all-state music group or an interschool music group/entry at the district level which may qualify for a state solo & ensemble festival, he/she must also comply with the following:
   a. A student must have received a passing grade and received credit in at least twenty periods of prepared class work per week or its equivalent during the last preceding semester in which he/she was enrolled at the school where the student participates. See 3) above for non-public and home school participants.

   b. If a student is assigned an "incomplete" or a "conditional" in a subject, he/she has not received a passing grade in this subject. The record at the end of the semester is final.

   c. A semester is defined as one half of a school year (approximately 18 school weeks or 90 school days). This definition is applicable to all schools regardless of the type of class scheduling format utilized (i.e., block, traditional, trimester, etc.).

   d. This rule is not applicable to IDEA '04 and Section 504 students when their individual education plans (IEP) under IDEA or their educational accommodation plans under Section 504 certify that the students are not required to meet the minimum academic requirements to have passed twenty hours of prepared work per week. However, all students must be enrolled in twenty hours per week and in regular attendance ten hours per week. Special education or Section 504 certification that the student is not required to meet the minimum academic requirements may not be enacted retroactively (after grades have been assigned at the end of the previous semester).

4. A student must be an enrolled member (receiving credit) of a curricular performing group, and that group must participate in the district festival. Curricular performing group refers to bands, choirs and orchestras. These represent the curricular study of music and promote ensembles outside of the school. Piano performers must also be a member of a curricular performing group or an accompanist of a curricular performing group. In exceptional cases, where a member school does not have a high school music program, any student studying with a private teacher may enter the district and state music festivals with the approval of the local school administrator provided the appropriate MHSA dues are paid. Note: This rule does not apply to non-public or home school participants. Non-public or home school participants will be required to perform with curricular group in order to be eligible for solos and ensembles.

5. In schools using full immersion block schedules, students who earned, or will earn, a full credit in a curricular performing group are granted the same eligibility as students who participate in a curricular performing group for an entire year in schools following traditional schedules.
6. Students performing for District or State Festival in groups of two or more must be from the same school unless a cooperative sponsorship agreement has been approved by the MHSA.
7. The MHSA prohibits any use and/or possession of tobacco, alcohol or other mood-altering drugs during participation. Violation will cause the director/coach or participant to be disqualified from further participation in that event.

III. DISTRICT MUSIC FESTIVALS ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE

Solo and ensemble preparation remains the time-honored foundation for improving and demonstrating personal music skills within the school context. As such, adjudication of solos or chamber music is stimulating and educational for student musicians and their directors. District music festivals are provided to encourage independent adjudication to these ends. District festivals provide the only forum in Montana in which curricular ensembles such as bands, orchestras and choirs are adjudicated for a rating. It is recommended that two days be used for the district event.

1. The state shall be divided into music districts based on geographical location. The Montana High School Association shall supervise and control interschool music festivals and inter-school activities in those districts. Member senior high schools and accredited junior high schools are eligible to participate.

APPENDIX A: THE COPYRIGHT LAW

Copyright restrictions are expected to be honored at all MHSA sanctioned activities. Illegal copying of materials is punishable by fine, imprisonment or both. Copyright laws state that educators are prohibited from copying to create or to replace or to substitute for anthologies, compilations or collective works. It is not permissible to copy works intended to be "consumable" in the course of study or of teaching such as workbooks, exercises, standardized tests and answer sheets. Copying for the purpose of substituting for the purchase of music is not permissible except with permission from the publisher. Copying without inclusion of the copyright notice which appears on the printed copy is prohibited. Unless licensed, the public performance of music, whether for profit or not, is a copyright infringement. Certain performances of music in schools, libraries, churches, or other non-profit situations are not infringements under section 110 of the Copyright Law.

Student-Participant Forms

Forms for activities participation are found on the Activities page of the district website under the "Activity Forms" tab; in the BPS Student Activities Participation Handbook; and DragonFly. Coaches need to be familiar with the forms and ensure all student-participants complete them prior to participating in the activity.

Activity Type	Forms
Athletic/Sports	2026-2027 Pre-Participation Physical Examination Form
	Student Athlete & Parent/Legal Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest & Concussion Statement
	Family and Medical Information Form
	Media Information Form
	Final Acknowledge Form
	Indemnity Agreement
	Interim Medical Form
Music	Family and Medical Information Form
	Media Information Form
	Final Acknowledge Form
	Indemnity Agreement
Forensics	Family and Medical Information Form
	Media Information Form
	Final Acknowledge Form
	Indemnity Agreement
School Club/Organization	Activity/Organization Information Form
	Media Information Form
	Final Acknowledge Form
	Indemnity Agreement

Coaches Guidelines & Requirements

Coach Hiring Process

Coaches and sponsors are approved by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the selection committee and the approval of the superintendent. The following hiring procedures are utilized:

1. **Announcement of opening** – Coaching positions are advertised for a minimum of 10 days.
2. **Application** – Application is found under "Employment Opportunities" on the district website.
3. **Screening of applicants** – Principal, principal's designee, and/or the Executive Director of Athletics and Activities screen applicants and determine the interview pool for head coaching positions. For assistant coaching positions, the principal or principal designee screen applications and set interview appointments.
4. **Interview and selection of candidates** – Principal sets up the interview team, times, and location. The Principal and Executive Director of Athletics and Activities are a part of the interview committee for head coaching positions. For assistant coaching positions, a designated administrator, the Activities Coordinator, and the head coach are part of the interviews.
5. **Final Selection** – After conducting interviews, the top candidate is selected and recommended to the principal who makes the final decision.

Once the selection process is complete and the required number of three references have been checked, the administrator(s) in charge completes the following items:

- **Stipend Contract** – After the Board approves the hiring at their regular Board meeting during the third Monday of each month, a stipend contract is issued. Both copies of the contract must be signed and returned to the district Activities Office. Non-district employees are paid in two increments, one at the pay period closest to the halfway point in the season, and the other at the end of the season. If the stipend is being split, a Split Stipend Contract must be signed by the coaches involved with job requirements clearly listed on the contract.
- **EPAR Form** – The school principal notifies the HR Department and the district Activities Office of the new hire. The district Activities Office processes the EPAR. The new hire goes to HR to complete all other required paperwork and the background check.
- **Club Stipends** – Clubs must meet the minimum requirements for participation in order for the activity to proceed. For activities in which participation numbers are not assured, contracts are withheld until the Activities Coordinator has determined that an appropriate number of students will participate.
- **Montana Coaches Association (MCA)** – As a benefit of employment with the Billings Public Schools, the district Activities Office pays the yearly MCA membership dues for BPS high school head and assistant coaches. The registration fees for the clinic are also be paid, unless the clinic days are being used for trade days. The district Activities Office secretary provides the membership forms by email each year.
- **MEA-MFT obligations and trade** – Based on SD2's agreement with the BEA, 12 hours of MEA trade for pre-approved learning opportunities can be completed when the MEA-MFT conference is not held in Billings; when it is in Billings MEA trade is not allowed. Coaches unable to attend the conference in Billings due to coaching duties must complete up to 12 MEA trade equivalent hours. Pre-approval and verification of completion of those learning opportunities is required and documentation must be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent by May 1. Failure to complete the MEA Trade hours or provide documentation will result in loss of pay.

  Coaching Clinics and Required Professional Learning for BPS Coaches
  Coaching Hours

  - A maximum of 9 hours for non-health and physical education coaches may be earned from coaching clinics and coaching courses.

- A maximum of 12 hours is allowed for health and physical education coaches to attend coaching clinics and courses.
- Eligibility is restricted to current district stipend holders, including volunteers officially registered with the district.
- **Note:** Certified staff who are coaches and teachers of Driver's Education may earn 9 total hours of trade. Nine hours of PIR Trad must be classroom/content-related.

Specific Course Approvals

- **NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching will be approved as a one-time PIR Trade for coaches. (Requires a special request for PIR Trade in MIDAS).**
- **The Montana Coaches Association (MCA) Clinic will be automatically approved in MIDAS. Individuals can enroll in this course in MIDAS and verify attendance and hours by submitting OPI units to the Office of Professional Learning. Coaches who are Health Enhancement and Physical Education teachers can earn up to 12 hours of Trade; non-HPE coaches can earn up to 9 Trade hours.**
- **Rules clinics and sport-specific training classes (General MHSA Rules Clinic, Sport-Specific Rules Clinics, and Coaching Speech & Debate) are excluded from PIR Trade hours, as they carry zero OPI units and represent stipend-specific job requirements rather than professional growth opportunities.**

Stipend Positions

The Board of Trustees approves Extracurricular Stipend Contracts based on recommendations from the Director of Athletics and Activities and Superintendent.

Except for short-term assignments as provided for in the Master Agreement, a contract is issued for each stipend-paying position. Each contract automatically expires at the end of each school year unless officially renewed by the Board of Trustees.

SD 2 allows "splitting" of extracurricular and co-curricular stipends. With approval from the Activities Coordinator, stipends can be divided to accommodate assistant coaches who cannot commit to full-time coaching duties. However, all coaches must undergo the interview process. When a stipend is split, involved coaches must sign a Split Stipend Contract outlining job responsibilities.

Head coaching and assistant coaching stipend positions are first be offered to members of the BEA. If no BEA members apply or meet the qualifications for head coaching positions, the positions are then offered to employees who are not members of the BEA. Stipend positions other than head coaching are exclusively available to BEA members. Non-staff employees may be considered for these positions only when qualified BEA members are not available.

Coaches Evaluation

At the conclusion of each season (fall, winter, or spring), high school head coaches undergo a performance evaluation conducted by the building principal and/or their designee, along with the Director of Athletics and Activities. The evaluation focuses on how well the coach adheres to the core values of the activities program and assesses whether their performance is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. It also serves as a chance to offer feedback on areas that require improvement and praise for areas where the coach has excelled.

High school assistant coaches are evaluated by the head coach at the conclusion of the season. If a head coach determines that an assistant coach will not be retained, the reasons are provided in writing to the building principal and the assistant coach within three weeks after the season ends.

If a reassignment is made in the coaching staff (e.g., a non-staff coach replaced by a newly hired on-staff person), everyone affected by the reassignment is notified in writing.

Performance Evaluation Meetings	
Position	**Individuals performing evaluation**
Head Coach/Sponsor	Principal/Principal Designee and Executive Director of Athletics and Activities
Assistant Coach	Head Coach and Principal, if necessary
Activities Coordinator	Principal and Director of Athletics and Activities
Gym Supervisor	Principal and Activities Coordinator
Head Trainer	Principals and Director of Athletics and Activities

Volunteer Coaches

- Volunteer coaches are not paid in any manner, including the use of outside money.
- Volunteer coaches must complete the Human Resources paperwork including a background check. This must be completed every two years.
- Volunteer coaches must complete the Volunteer Application form **and** the Volunteer Coach Application form and meet with the school principal and/or Activities Coordinator.
- If a volunteer coach takes a hiatus from coaching for a season or more, the entire application process must be redone.
- Volunteer coaches fall under the same coaching requirements as a stipend coach.
- Volunteer coaches complete the same certification courses as a stipend coach.
- Volunteer coaches complete the duties assigned by the head coach.
- Volunteer coaches know and adhere to district and school policies as well as the items in this handbook.
- Volunteer coaches cannot be given specific supervision duties. A stipend coach must be present at all times.
- Volunteer coaches do not have authority to handle matters involving officials, parents, other coaches, etc., unless in an emergency situation approved by the principal or Activities Coordinator.
- One volunteer coach is allowed for every two stipends allotted to the program. For example, four stipends are allotted to basketball so the maximum number of volunteer coaches is two.
- There is no requirement to have volunteer coaches.
- Volunteer coaches who are SD2 employees are provided a substitute for post-season contests only.

Course Requirements for Coaches

MHSA Rules & Regulations require that coaches complete the following courses in order to receive a contract. The district website contains links to each course under the Coaches icon on the Activities page.



Athletic coaches use an Arbiter account to upload certificates of completion in order for the requirement to be satisfied. Instructions for creating an account and uploading certificates are found on the Coaches page of the district website.

NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching – Required for all athletics coaches

This NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course provides a unique student-centered curriculum for interscholastic teacher/coaches, assisting them in creating a healthy and age-appropriate athletic experience that supports the educational mission of our nation's schools.

The cost is $35.00 and must be completed one time in a coach's career. It may be submitted once for 12 OPI renewal units.

NFHS Concussion in Sports – Required for all athletics coaches

The NFHS has teamed up with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to educate coaches, officials, parents and students on the importance of proper concussion recognition and management in high school sports. This NFHS Concussion in Sports course highlights the impact of sports-related concussion on athletes, teaches how to recognize a suspected concussion, and provides protocols to manage a suspected concussion with steps to help players return to play safely after a concussion.

There is no charge for this course and must be completed every year. The certificate is good from July 1 – June 30. It may be submitted for 1 OPI renewal unit.

First Aid, Health and Safety – Required for all coaches

There may be no more critical element in the ability of interscholastic students to participate in activities than their health and safety. This NFHS First Aid Certification online course is designed as an overview of first aid, including best practices for many situations requiring medical attention. The skills taught in this course do not replace the expertise of a medical professional but they do offer guidelines and techniques for temporary assistance until medical experts arrive on the scene. And because accidents or injuries can happen anywhere, not all of the knowledge and skills learned in this course are strictly for athletic injuries. They may also be used to aid officials, fellow coaches, and spectators who become injured or fall ill.

The cost is $35.00 and must be completed every 2 years. It may be submitted for 6 OPI renewal units.

CPR & AED – Required for all high school coaches; optional for middle school

While interscholastic activities promote health, competition, and teamwork, the potential for medical emergency is always present. The NFHS CPR and AED course helps school programs be more prepared for these emergencies. This course highlights the Importance of creating, implementing, and maintaining an emergency action plan, along with the ways in which a sudden cardiac arrest emergency is identified. This course includes demonstrations of what to do when someone collapses – calling 911 and managing the area, properly performing CPR, and how to appropriately use an AED.

This course is optional for middle school coaches and is required for high school coaches.

MHSA General Rules Clinic and Sports Specific Rules Clinic – Required for all athletics coaches

All coaches are required to complete the MHSA General Rules Clinic and MHSA Sport Specific Rules Clinic. The Sport Specific course comes with 28 tracks, specific to each sport and role within that sport. The courses become available on August 1 for fall sports; November 1 for winter sports; and March 1 for spring sports.

There is no charge for this course and it must be completed every year.

Coaching Speech and Debate – Required for all Speech and Debate coaches

Speech and Debate events provide a setting outside of the classroom for participants to showcase their speech and debate skills, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. This course guides new and experienced coaches with tips and techniques to help their team perform to the best of their ability and provide a rewarding experience for all those involved. Head, assistant, and volunteer Speech and Debate sponsors must complete the NFHS Coaching Speech and Debate Course.

There is no charge for this course and it must be completed every 5 years.

BPS District Email Account – Required for all coaches

It is crucial for coaches and sponsors to access their district email accounts regularly, as this is the primary method for receiving information and updates about activities.

Safe Schools Modules – Required for all coaches

Safe Schools is the system used for required annual training and is accessed through each employee's district email. Coaches and sponsors must complete the required training by the deadline.

	Required Courses by Role							
	Fundamentals of Coaching	Concussion in Sports	First Aid, Health & Safety	CPR & AED	Coaching Mental Wellness	General MHSA Rules Clinic	Sports Specific Rules Clinic	Coaching Speech & Debate
Cost of course	$35	Free	$35	$10	Free	Free	Free	Free
# of OPI units	12	1	6	None	None	None	None	None
Expiration timeframe	None	1 year	2 years	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year	None
High School Athletic Head Coach or Assistant Coach (including Cheer & Dance and Volunteers)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
High School Speech & Debate Head Coach or Assistant Coach (including Volunteers)			X	X				X
Middle School Athletic Head Coach or Assistant Coach (including Volunteers)	X	X	X		X	X	X	

To request to have these certifications considered for OPI Renewal and PIR Trade, submit a proposal using FlowForms. Each certification requires a separate submission. Direct any questions about OPI Renewal and PIR Trade to:

PIR Trade	OPI Renewal
Cassie Fairchild	Maria Weidich
fairchildc@billingsschools.org	weidichm@billingsschools.org
406.281.5069	406.281.5002

Coaching Clinics and Workshops

Coaching clinics and workshops may be attended with approval by the building principal. ECA funds can be used for this staff development under the following conditions:

- Clinic/workshop and related expenses are pre-approved by the building principal or Activities Coordinator.
- Clinics or workshops must be directly related to the coaching assignment, the improvement of coaching abilities, and for the direct and positive benefit of student-participants.
- At no time will ECA funds be used for clinics or workshops at the expense of other needs in the program, such as meals and equipment.
- If clinic or workshop is paid by fundraising, this must be clearly communicated on the fundraising form.

NCAA Outreach and Education

The NCAA offers brochures, guides, and other materials on their website that are designed for high school student-athletes, parents, coaches and others who help students successfully navigate the initial-eligibility, recruiting, and college selection processes. BPS coaches are familiar with the website, requirements, and the NCAA Eligibility Center.

These educational resources are found on the NCAA website under the “Student-Athletes” heading. https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2015/2/11/student-athletes-future-educational-resources.aspx

- **Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete** - The guide contains information about academic requirements to compete and what to expect as a collegiate student-athlete. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/CBSA.pdf
- **Initial-Eligibility Brochure** - A quick guide to the standards and steps that it takes to become an NCAA Division I or II student-athlete. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/IE_Brochure.pdf
- **Division I Academic Requirements Document** – A brief overview of Division I initial-eligibility academic requirement. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/DI_ReqsFactSheet.pdf
- **Division I Eligibility Standards** - https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/10/24/play-division-i-sports.aspx
- **Division II Academic Requirements Document** – A brief overview of Division II initial-eligibility academic requirement. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/DII_ReqsFactSheet.pdf
- **Division II Eligibility Standards** - https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/10/24/play-division-ii-sports.aspx
- **NCAA Eligibility Center** – Student-athletes interested in competing in NCAA sports must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/

Extra Duty Assignments

Employees have the opportunity to take on additional duty assignments for compensation. Certified employees must fulfill 4 hours of unpaid extra duty initially before being eligible for paid assignments thereafter. These assignments are offered to certified staff members; non-certified staff are considered when certified staff are unavailable or have fulfilled their assignments. Non-BEA members may also work these duties at the BEA-approved wage rate.

The Extra Duty & Activity Time Sheet form must be completed in order to receive pay. The form must be completed in its entirety and signed by the individual who is getting paid and the building administrator. The signed form should be sent to the district Activities Office for processing.

Position	Pay Rate
Track Starters	Flat rate of $150/meet
FinishLynx & Hy-Tek operators	Flat rate of $150/meet
Post-Season workers	$20/hr
Tickets, scorebook, timers, etc.	$15.50/hr
Part-time employees	Regular rate of pay

Coach Communications

Following are the primary expectations regarding communication and information dissemination to student-participants, parents/guardians, administrators, etc.:

- **Administrative Communication** – The head coach or sponsor is expected to openly communicate with administrators and the Activities Coordinator. When a controversial situation arises, the coach or sponsor informs the administrator, seeking additional input whenever possible.
- **In-Season Meetings** – Head coaches and sponsors are required to participate in the in-season meetings organized by the school Activities Coordinator. These meetings serve to review

schedules, coordinate practice and competition plans, and address any other issues that may arise during the season.

- **NCAA and other College Eligibility Standards** – Head coaches are responsible for communicating college clearing house requirements and academic eligibility standards required of all athletes who are college bound.
- **General Parent Meeting** – On the Wednesday prior to the start of Fall activities, the Activities Coordinator holds a meeting introducing SD2 activities programs and provide general information about *all* activities.
- **Parent Meeting** – Head coaches and sponsors are required to conduct a parent meeting at the beginning of each season (for Fall activities, coaches are encouraged to host this meeting following the general parent meeting) to communicate district, school, and program details verbally and in writing, including practice and game schedules, along with other relevant information. In addition, coaches discuss the Billings Public Schools Student Activities Handbook, emphasizing the Code of Conduct section, and the Program/Team Specific Handbook.
- **Participant Meeting** – Prior to tryouts, head coaches and sponsors are required to hold a meeting for interested participants and provide the practice and tryout schedules and team selection criteria. District, school, and program information and expectations must be communicated both verbally and in writing.
- **Player Promotion** – Head coaches are responsible for maintaining communication with college coaches within the boundaries of the recruiting process.
- **Pre-Season Letters and Notices** – Head coaches are responsible for communicating information regarding open gyms, conditioning, camps, tournaments, tryouts, and other program information and schedules.
- **Program/Team Specific Handbook** – Coaches and sponsors must have a handbook describing rules and expectations for the activity, such as dress, curfew, bench conduct, and practice rules. All student-participants are subject to those rules.
- **Program Promotion** – Head coaches are responsible for giving game results to the media immediately following contests. The coach or sponsor promotes their program through media interviews, speaking requests, and attendance at other meetings as much as possible.

Team Selection

Following are the guidelines for team selection:

- Prior to starting tryouts, the coach or sponsor provides a description of the selection criteria and tryout process to the Activities Coordinator.
- The head coach and staff make final team selections.
- Once teams are selected, a parent meeting is conducted and the team handbook reviewed.
- Coaches may share with a student-participant and their parents/guardians any evaluation materials they may have kept and used for final selections. However, information about other student-participants is not allowed to be shared.

Team vs Individual Coaching

Coaching rules for all MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations [Section (7) Coaching/Practice Regulations]. There are distinct parameter differences between team sports and individual sports. Team coaching applies to Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball. Individual coaching applies to Cross Country, Golf, Swimming, Tennis, Track & Field, and Wrestling.

Coaches of individual sports are not affected by the team coaching rule. However, *required* instruction outside the high school season as defined by MHSA cannot be mandated of any student-participant.

Participation Survey

The Participation Survey specifies the number of student-participants in each activity. It is necessary for Title IX compliance. Complete the appropriate Participation Survey (either High School or Middle School) found on the Coaches page of the district website at the beginning of each season after team selection has been made. For middle schools, the form must be signed by the principal; for high schools, the form must be signed by the Activities Coordinator. Send completed forms to the district Activities Office for processing.

Lettering Requirement

High school head coaches set the criteria for lettering and has discretion to decide who receives letters in their program. The criteria are communicated to student-participants before the season starts. Student-participants who meet the criteria receive a letter initially, followed by a pin for each subsequent letter earned.

Awards Banquets

At the end of each high school season, an awards presentation in the form of either a banquet or team gathering, may be held. Parents and other family members should be invited. The rules governing awards banquets for all MHSA coaches are outlined in the MHSA By Laws [Article II, Section (15) Award Rules] and [Article II, Section (16) Amateur Rules].

In addition, the following BPS rules apply:

- Coordinate the arrangements with the Activities Coordinator.
- Banquet arrangements must abide by the requirements and expectations of equity in order to be sponsored, promoted, and encouraged by the school.
- Awards presentations must be held in a school facility.
- Expenses for awards and banquets must adhere to a reasonable budget allocated from the team's ECA funds, as determined by the head coach and the Activities Coordinator. It is advised that ECA funds cover, at most, the awards and main dish of any meal provided.

Open Gym

Open Gym rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations [Section (7) Coaching/Practice Regulations, Section D].

In addition, the following BPS rules apply:

- Teams are limited to two nights or mornings per week, except weekends.
- Open gyms may only last for two hours and must be scheduled in two-hour blocks.
- Open gyms cannot take place when there is a competition going on in the building.
- Open gyms are approved and scheduled with the Activities Coordinator.
- Club activities are not open gyms. They do not meet the MHSA criterion for open gyms and therefore have no claim to preferential gym time in district facilities. The same is true for non-school related traveling athletic teams. Club and traveling teams are only allowed to use district facilities based on the BPS Facility Use Policy.
- Open gyms cannot take place during the first two weeks of scheduled competition of each season.

Weight Rooms

Weight rooms must be supervised at all times by a qualified staff member. Student-participants must follow the rules and regulations set forth by the district, school, and weight room supervisors. Safety

protocols must be followed closely. Weight room keys shall never be given to a student-participant or unauthorized person.

Summer weight room programs:

- Must be financially self-supporting.
- Supervisor pay varies depending on the time, size, and length of the program. For supervisors to be paid, the blue time sheet must be completed.
- Weight room fees must be held in a school ECA account.

Coach Ejection/Suspension

Any coach representing SD2 who is ejected from an interscholastic athletic competition for unsportsmanlike conduct is not allowed to participate for the remainder of the event and is suspended for the next regularly scheduled or rescheduled event. Coaches must meet with the Executive Director of Athletics and Activities before returning to the next practice or contest.

The MHSA Handbook Article II Section (33) Sportsmanship Guidelines contains more information.

Home School/Nonpublic/Virtual Student Participation

In 2021, the State Legislature enacted Senate Bill 157, which prohibits a school district or athletic association from limiting or restricting participation of a student from a nonpublic, home school, or virtual learning environment in extracurricular activities with public schools, subject to the following guidelines:

- If a nonpublic, home school, or virtual student-participant participates in an activity at one school, they must remain at that school. Otherwise, they are subject to the transfer rules if they change schools.
- Students are subject to the same participation standards as those required of other full-time students.
- Students must adhere to the rules of any interscholastic organization to which the participating school belongs.
- The academic eligibility for interscholastic participation by a student-participant is validated in writing in the following manner:

Student type	**Eligibility provided in writing by…**
Nonpublic	Head administrator of nonpublic school
Home school	Educator providing instruction
Virtual learner	Proof of enrollment in accredited virtual learning platform

- Students enrolling for participation in a SD2 activity must complete the following:
  - Arrange a meeting with their parents and the school Registrar.
  - Arrange a meeting with school Activities Secretary to complete the following:
    - Enroll in PowerSchool as nonpublic, home school, or virtual learner.
    - Pay all fees including the SD2 Activities Fee, the SD2 Participation Fee, and any specific team or program fees.
    - Complete the required paperwork which is the same as every other student-participant.

Officials

Officials are selected from the Billings Officials Association and/or the Worden Officials Association through the district Activities Office. The district Activities Office facilitates officials' pay, funded through school ECA accounts.

MOA officials are paid in accordance with the Montana Officials Association Official Handbook for high school events including football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, and softball. The fee and expense allowance for each official working any season game, playoff game, or state championship adheres to the set rate published in the current MOA handbook.

Post-Season Tournament Administrative Supervision

Administrators or their designated representative(s) attend out-of-town, post-season, or state tournaments as deemed necessary based on spectator attendance, including both students and adults, and the potential for issues to arise. The allocation of administrators funded from the district Activities Office funds is as follows:

Sport	**Administrator**
State Baseball	One person from each school that qualifies
State Basketball	One person from each school that qualifies
State Cross Country	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Flag Football	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Football Playoffs	One person from each school that qualifies for semifinals; two people for finals
State Forensics	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Golf	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Soccer	One person from each school that qualifies
State Softball	One person from each school that qualifies
State Swimming	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Tennis	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison
State Track	One person from each school that qualifies
State Volleyball	One person from each school that qualifies
State Wrestling	Optional attendance with the Director of Athletics and Activities as the liaison

- Additional persons may attend at the discretion of the building principal and funded from building ECA funds. The additional persons are subject to the same responsibilities as those funded by the district Activities Office.

Costs paid by the district Activities Office is as follows:

- Round trip mileage for one car per administrator is provided. If the administrator rides the team bus, no mileage is paid. Carpooling is required whenever possible & the owner/driver receives the mileage.
- One motel room in the same location as the team is provided only for the nights requiring supervision based on location and tournament schedule.
- Meals are provided during travel to and from the tournament, as well as while the tournament is in session.
- Tournament tickets are provided out of the MHSA school allotment.

Supervisory expectations are as follows:

- Position themselves on the floor near the student section during basketball tournament games played by SD2 schools.
- Address issues arising from SD2's student and/or adult fans, including matters related to sportsmanship, adherence to MHSA rules, inappropriate signs, etc.
- Assist teams with issues or problems related to motel accommodations, transportation, etc.
- Assist in supervising student-participants at the motel, although the primary responsibility for team supervision rests with the coaches.
- Assist the coaches in handling student-participant violations of team or SD2 rules.

Student Discipline

Supervision

Coaches and sponsors are legally and contractually responsible for the supervision of student-participants under their direction at all times, including, but not limited to, the following:

- During practice sessions and team meetings.
- Before and after practice in locker rooms, training rooms, etc.
- While on any form of transportation carrying teams or groups to or from an activity or event.
- In motels, restaurants, and other public places while the team or group is present.
- During trips from the time of departure until the time of return, twenty-four hours a day.

Rule violations by student-participants during supervised hours are handled immediately and appropriately by the coach or sponsor.

Complaint Process

Coaches who receive a complaint from a student-participant follow these guidelines:

- Meet by appointment only and adhere to a "cooling off" period of 24 hours where no meetings are scheduled.
- Schedule meetings only for appropriate concerns such as the mental and physical well-being of the student-participant, ways in which the coach can help the student-participant improve, or concerns about the student-participant's behavior.
- Do not schedule meetings for inappropriate concerns such as playing time, team strategy, game decisions, or other team members
- Ensure the student-participant attends the meeting.
- Get involvement from the Activities Coordinator and/or school principal if issues persist.
- Bring additional concerns to the Executive Director of Athletics and Activities who works closely with the school principal to determine an appropriate course of action.

Investigation and Appeal Process

When a violation of a district or program rule occurs, the coach or sponsor is to adhere to the following due process procedure:

- Notify the building principal of the violation or infraction before determining the type of discipline.
- Notify in writing the Director of Athletics and Activities within three days of the violation.
- Organize a meeting with the student-participant and present them with the pertinent information, such as the violated rule and evidence, and offer them the opportunity to respond.
- Assess whether a violation occurred based on all available evidence.
- Notify the student-participant and their parent/guardian of the outcome and associated consequences if a violation occurred. Provide written notification if consequences are imposed.
- Note: If a student-participant disagrees with the decision, they may request a review by the Executive Director of Athletics and Activities, followed by further review by the District Superintendent and Board of Trustees.

Consequences

The following consequences apply to the scenarios described:

- GAME EJECTION – A student-participant who is ejected from an interscholastic athletic competition for unsportsmanlike conduct may not participate for the remainder of the event

and is suspended for the next regularly scheduled or rescheduled event. A student-participant cannot be uniform while suspended.

- DAILY ABSENCE – A student-participant is not allowed to practice or compete on the day of an absence unless prior approval has been granted by the principal. Student-participants must be in class at least ½ day to participate.
- SCHOOL SUSPENSION – A student-participant may not, under any circumstance, take part in practice or competition on a day they have been suspended from school.

In addition to the consequences set forth above and in school rules, policies, and procedures for violations of school rules, the following penalties apply:

Misconduct

A. First Offense
   i. Parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible following completion of the investigation.
   ii. Appropriate law enforcement agency is notified, if necessary.
   iii. Student may not participate in competition in any school activities for 25% of the regular season competitions. The student-participant is required to attend and participate in practices and meetings at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.
   iv. For cheer and dance, which span both the fall and winter seasons, the suspension is 2 weeks from the first date of suspension during which participation in any events in prohibited. The student-participant are required to attend and participate in practices and meetings at the discretion of the coach.
   v. For acts of vandalism, theft, or destruction of property, restitution must be made prior to returning to participation.
   i. Other discipline applies in accordance with school non-discrimination/anti-harassment policies and other policies. See Policy 3300 Student Discipline: Consequences for Violations of Student Code of Conduct and Policy 3350 Student Discipline: Due Process.

B. Second Offense
   ii. Parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible following completion of the investigation.
   iii. Appropriate law enforcement agency is notified, if necessary.
   iv. Student may not participate for 50% of the regular season competitions.
   v. For cheer and dance, which span both the fall and winter seasons, the suspension is for 4 weeks from the first date of suspension during which participation in any events in prohibited. The student-participant is required to attend and participate in practices and meetings at the discretion of the coach.
   vi. For acts of vandalism, theft, or destruction of property, restitution must be made prior to returning to activity participation.
   vii. Other discipline applies in accordance with school non-discrimination/anti-harassment policies and other policies. See Policy 3300 Student Discipline: Consequences for Violations of Student Code of Conduct and Policy 3350 Student Discipline: Due Process.
   viii. Team awards or captainships earned up to that point may be withdrawn at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

C. Third Offense
   i. Parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible following completion of the investigation.
   ii. Appropriate law enforcement agency is notified, if necessary.
   iii. Student-participant is prohibited from participating in any school activities for one calendar year including weekends. This includes cheer and dance participants.

iv. For acts of vandalism, theft, or destruction of property, restitution must be made prior to returning to activity participation.
ix. Other discipline applies in accordance with school non-discrimination/anti-harassment policies and other policies. See Policy 3300 Student Discipline: Consequences for Violations of Student Code of Conduct and Policy 3350 Student Discipline: Due Process.
v. Team awards or captainships earned up to that point may be withdrawn at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

Chemical Use (Distribution)

A. First Offense
   i. Parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible following completion of the investigation.
   ii. Appropriate law enforcement agency is notified, if necessary.
   iii. Student-participant must complete a district approved drug awareness program.
   iv. Student-participant is prohibited from participating in any school activities for 90 calendar days, including weekends.
   v. All team awards or captainships earned up to that point may be withdrawn at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

B. Second Offense
   i. Parent/guardian is notified as soon as possible following completion of the investigation.
   ii. Appropriate law enforcement agency is notified, if necessary.
   iii. Student-participant must complete a district approved drug awareness program.
   iv. Student-participant is prohibited from participating in any school activities for one calendar year, including weekends.
   v. All team awards or captainships earned up to that point may be withdrawn at the discretion of the coach or sponsor.

High School Program Offerings & Guidelines

SPORT	TRYOUT?	BOYS	GIRLS
Baseball	Y	X	(X)
Basketball (V, JV, SO, FR)	Y	X	X
Cheer/Dance	Y	(X)	X
Cross Country (V, JV)	N	X	X
Flag Football	Y		X
Football (V, JV, FR)	N	X	(X)
Forensics (V, JV)	N	X	X
Golf (V, JV)	Y	X	X
Music (Band/Orchestra/Chorus)	N	X	X
Pep Band	N	X	X
Soccer (V, JV)	Y	X	X
Softball (V, JV)	Y		X
Swimming (V)	N	X	X
Tennis (V, JV)	Y	X	X
Track (V, JV)	N	X	X
Volleyball (V, JV, SO, FR1, FR2)	Y		X
Wrestling (V, JV)	N	X	X

The following BPS guidelines apply to all high school programs:

- Student-participants selected to a team must commit to attending practice daily and work hard, showing improvement on a consistent basis.
- Entry fees to all MHSA events will be paid by the district Activities Office. Invoices must be submitted to the district Activities Office for payment.

Post Season

- For most state tournaments, teams travel on Wednesday after school. In the case of a game on Thursday in the late afternoon or evening, departure is Thursday morning.
- Teams eliminated from the state tournament travel home on the day of elimination except where the bus driver is over their allotted traveling hours or the weather does not permit safe travel.
- For playoff or state championship games played in Billings, two tickets are provided for each member of the high school coaching staff.
- Tickets and/or tournament passes are provided for players, cheerleaders, band members, etc. as long as they are within the allotted number of participants.
- Tickets exceeding the MHSA allotment may be purchased using the school or program ECA upon approval from the principal.

Baseball

Baseball rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Baseball section. MHSA Handbook - Baseball

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- Post season expenses are allotted for 21 persons total - 17 players, 2 coaches, and 2 managers.

Basketball

Basketball rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Basketball section. MHSA Handbook - Basketball

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- The first 3 days of the season are designated for tryout practices. Team selections are made at the conclusion of tryouts.
- Crosstown games are played at the home team's school unless a special circumstance necessitates that it is played at Metra.

Post Season

- Expenses for the following positions are paid, not to exceed 22 total people: 1 head coach; 3 assistant coaches, 1 (or 2) volunteer coaches, 1 trainer, 2 managers, 12 players, and 2 alternates.
- No more than 12 players are allowed to be in uniform for any tournament/playoff game.
- Additional expenses are covered by the school or program ECA upon principal approval.
- In the event a team does not qualify for the playoffs or state tournament, the head coach is allowed to attend the event and have the following expenses paid:
  - Transportation, meals, substitute, lodging, and tickets.
  - Only a ticket is provided for the coach's spouse. The coach is required to cover all other expenses.
  - If the tournament is held in Billings, two additional tickets are provided for members of the coaching staff and subs are provided for SD2 coaches.

Cheer/Dance

Cheerleading, as an extracurricular activity, is not a competitive activity sponsored by the MHSA. Cheerleading/dance rules for MHSA coaches and sponsors are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Spirit section. MHSA Handbook - Spirit

The provisions of the NFHS Spirit Rule Book also apply.

In addition, the following BPS rules apply:

- Team Selection
  - The selection committee scores tryouts and makes final team selections.
  - Once teams are selected, a parent meeting is conducted to review the team handbook and expectations.
- Each school may have no more than 16 varsity cheerleaders and 12 junior varsity cheerleaders.
- A school may choose to have a split squad of 16 varsity cheerleaders and 12 junior varsity cheerleaders in the fall and another group in the winter. While the winter cheer squad may be attending practices, they are not allowed to cheer in the fall.

- Cheer and dance teams may select team captains. The criteria for being a team captain must be written and communicated clearly prior to the start of the season. Captains are not allowed to be in charge of discipline, practices, game times, etc. Captains are expected to be good leaders who support the goals of the coaches.
- JV cheer team members are allowed to substitute for a varsity cheer team member if that member is absent.
- The official first day of practice is August 1st of each new school year.
- Members of the cheer and dance teams are expected to attend practices regularly.
- Varsity and JV cheer teams are expected to cheer at their respective levels at regular season crosstown volleyball, basketball, and football games, and wrestling matches.
- JV cheer team members are expected to cheer at JV events as scheduled by their coaches. If a varsity cheer team is performing at halftime of the varsity game, JV cheer may be a part of that performance. Once the varsity halftime performance is over, the JV cheer members can be dismissed from that event.
- Cheer teams are expected to be warmed-up and ready to lead the student body by the 15:00 minute mark before the game start.
- Dance team members are expected to be ready to perform by the 2:00 minute mark before halftime.
- Cheerleaders and dancers who wish to compete in athletics may participate in activities that do not conflict with the cheer season.
- Varsity cheer and dance teams may travel for State contests only. No travel is allowed for regular season, playoff games, or divisional tournaments.
- At the State Wrestling Tournament, cheerleaders present the flag and/or awards on a rotational basis. During the Saturday night finals only two cheerleaders are allowed on the floor at one time.
- Cheer coaches work out an equitable schedule rotation for their teams to perform at soccer and other district events.
- In addition to the courses required of all coaches, the cheerleading sponsor is also required to have the Cheer & Dance Safety Certification through the NFHS.
- SD2 sponsors a maximum of two cheer and/or dance competitions or events throughout the school year. Teams opting to attend these competitions must independently raise funds and cover all expenses. Approval for these competitions is required by the school principal, Activities Coordinator, and the Director of Athletics and Activities.

Cross Country

Cross Country rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Cross Country section. MHSA Handbook - Cross Country

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS rules also apply:

- Coaches can choose to start on the first allowed Friday of practice or no later than the following Monday.
- Student-participants who want to participate in an out-of-state event during the season must get approval from the MHSA. Meets approved by the MHSA count against the student-participant's 10 regular season meet limit. Contact the Director of Athletics and Activities to start the process.
- Two coaches are allowed to attend the State Cross Country meet.
- One bus is shared by all 3 high school for transportation to the State meet.

Flag Football

Flag football is not an MHSA sanctioned sport at this time.

The following BPS rules apply:

- Practice starts on the first Tuesday after fall sports being in August.
- Fifteen student-participants per team is recommended to ensure playing time for all.
- The six week season begins with a jamboree on the first weekend and the state tournament at the end of the season in the first week of October.

Football

Football rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Football section. MHSA Handbook - Football

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS rules also apply:

- Practice starts on the first allowed Friday in August.
- A 9-game regular season is scheduled by the AA Conference ADs and approved by the MHSA.
- Home varsity games for all schools are played on Wendy's Field at Daylis Stadium.
- 53 persons including players, coaches, managers, and administrators are allowed to attend state playoff games.
- For trips to Kalispell for any regular season 7:00 pm game, the team departs that morning with no overnight stay. For a regular season game at 4:00 pm, the team departs the day before and stays overnight part way. For any playoff contest in Kalispell, departure is always one day prior to game day with an overnight stay part way.

Forensics

Forensics and drama rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Forensics & Drama section. MHSA Handbook - Forensics & Drama

The following BPS also rules apply:

- The AA State tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) district qualifying tournaments are part of the SD2 sponsored season. The NSDA National Tournament is not part of the SD2 sponsored season and participants will help raise funds to pay for transportation, lodging, meals, and registrations fees.
- Each year, the district Activities Office makes arrangements for MFEA Convention under the following guidelines:
  - Head coaches are allowed to attend.
  - Subs are allowed for head coaches only.
  - The head coach must complete a leave request prior to the convention.
  - Assistants can attend but all fees, including a substitute, are paid by the program's ECA.

Golf

Golf rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Golf section. MHSA Handbook - Golf

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS rules also apply:

- In order to try out for an SD2 golf team, a student-participant needs to have an established handicap with a local golf club/course.

- Because the number of practices and practice times are subject to the schedule of the course involved, tryouts are determined in collaboration with course management.
- Teams travel to tournaments with 5 student-participants (per gender), one head coach per school, and one district assistant coach.
- A practice round on Wednesday prior to the state tournament is allowed on the state tournament course if approved by the host course. Fees for the practice round is paid out of the individual school's ECA.

Music

The MHSA Rules and Regulations apply to all music programs. MHSA Handbook - Fine Arts. The information in the MHSA Music Booklet also applies to all music programs.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- Curricular groups participate in the following activities that make up the regular program:
  - District Music Festival – all curricular ensembles (required)
  - AA Festivals – the top auditioned curricular ensemble of Band, Orchestra, and Choir (required)
  - Additional ensembles may participate in other festivals (e.g., Concert Choir Festival or Treble Choir Festival) that are one day and within 150 miles of Billings.
  - Extracurricular ensembles may participate in festivals as approved by school administration (e.g., jazz festivals)
- Each school's music department determines the fee for the cleaning, maintenance, and use of their performance attire for all performing groups. There are no refunds for performance attire fees.
- Student-participants provide their own supplies for their instrument, such as reeds, valve oil, rosin, and strings.
- Music instructors are responsible for helping student-participants prepare their music prior to festivals, including the All-State Music Festival.
- Participation in AA Festivals and the District 9 Music Festival may count towards course grade requirements or be used as optional point criteria for grades.
- Tours are on a two-year rotational basis.
- When scheduling tours, proposing two or three potential dates is recommended. It can be challenging to arrange transportation for SD2 activities during peak travel times, making it hard to secure enough buses. Coordinate with the district Activities Office to identify periods when activity-related travel is minimal.
- Out-of-State Trips
  - The Board of Trustees approves out-of-state trips more than 300 miles one way.
  - Out-of-state trips do not need approval from the MHSA Music Committee or the Board of Directors. Approval from local boards, trustees, and administrators, in collaboration with music instructors, is sufficient for these trips.
  - Both educational value and expenses are considered when granting permission for a trip.
- Transportation Requests
  - Requests for transportation, whether local or out of town, are submitted through the respective school principal who submits the request to the Coordinator of Music Education and the Director of Transportation. Bus arrangements are handled by the district Transportation Office.
  - Expenses are paid by the ECA funds for the specific department or ensemble.
- Trip Application Procedure

- Submit trip requests by November 1 to facilitate annual calendar planning. Obtain the trip applications from the building principal. Submit the applications at least 45 days prior to the trip to the principal, Coordinator of Music Education, the Superintendent, and the district Activities Office.
- Funds for the trip are the responsibility of the specific department and are raised by fundraising or paid by the student-participant prior to departure.

- District Music Festivals
  - Entry fees for student-participants are paid by the district Activities Office. Invoices must be provided to the Activities Office for payment.
  - Applications and entry forms are approved by the building principal.
  - Senior and West high schools serve as host sites for the District Music Festivals on a two-year rotation between the schools.
  - The District 9 Music Festival is funded by entry fees from all participating schools.
  - Per MHSA requirements, curricular ensembles are required to perform in the local district festival.
  - The Coordinator of Music Education is responsible for assuring the MHSA Office of Participation of all required groups in the district festival.
- State Solo and Ensemble Festival
  - Entry fees for student-participants are paid by the Fine Arts office.
  - Skyview High School serves as the host site for the Eastern State Solo and Ensemble Festival each year.
- All-State Band, Orchestra, and Chorus
  - Entry fees are paid by the district Activities Office.
  - The Fine Arts office and/or school music ECA funds cover additional expenses, including travel.
- Northwest and National Honor Festivals and Conferences
  - Northwest Honor Festivals and Conferences are held every year.
  - National Association of Music Education (which includes band, choir, and orchestra) is held in odd-numbered years. American Choral Directors Association (choirs only) is held in even numbered years. Date and place are announced by the National organizations.
  - Music organizations who are accepted to participate in Northwest/National conference performance activities shall obtain approval from the building principal, Coordinator of Music Education, Superintendent, and Board of Trustees.
- All-Northwest Band, Orchestra, and Chorus
  - Eligibility is determined by MHSA rules.
  - Entry fees and transportation expenses are the responsibility of the parent/guardian and student-participants, in conjunction with the school director.
  - When possible and economically feasible, transportation is by common carrier.
- Musicals
  - It is not mandatory for music directors to produce a musical; it is solely at the discretion of the choral director.
  - If the choral director decides to produce a musical, the musical is submitted to the principal for approval. The principal may consult with the Coordinator of Music Education to determine the appropriateness of a given musical selection.
  - The choral director serves as the show's producer and handles all organization including publicity, programs, ticketing, finances, and delegating responsibilities as necessary.
  - The performances are scheduled for a maximum of five showings, not counting the student premiere and guest night.
  - Rehearsals are scheduled for a maximum of six weeks before opening night, with some flexibility allowed to accommodate other school activities and the academic calendar.

- Printed rehearsal and performance schedules are distributed to parents, students, the principal, and the Coordinator of Music Education.
- Regular rehearsals, excluding dress rehearsals, conclude by 10:00 pm. No rehearsals or public performances are scheduled after 6:00 pm on any Wednesday evening without approval from the Board of Trustees.
- Financial profits from the production are fairly distributed among all participating groups and programs.
- Complimentary tickets may be distributed at the discretion of the choral director.

◈ Honors Music Programs

- Music instructors recommend students for auditions to the director of each honor organization. Selections are based on ability, and students must be in good standing within their school's music organization to qualify for participation.

	Who is eligible to audition	Fee
Band	6th graders	$55 (includes fee for Spring tour)
Chorus	4th – 6th graders	
Orchestra	6th – 12th graders	

- At the discretion of the honor group director, and in consultation with the Coordinator of Music Educations, honor groups may perform at civic or special events. Performance at these additional events may not be required of the students in the honor groups.

◈ Receipt and Bond for musical instruments

- The receipt and bond for music instruments are signed by the student-participant, parent/guardian, and music instructor, and all rental fees paid prior to issuing the instrument.
- In specific instances where the student cannot afford to pay in advance, a scholarship may be awarded. This award is made only upon advice and with consent of the principal, based on free and reduced lunch guidelines. All other financial resources, such as Angel Funds, must be considered before a scholarship is given to a student.
- Rental contracts and rental receipts are submitted immediately to the district Music Office for deposit.
- If a student owns an instrument and the instructor asks them to play a different one, rental fees are waived because the school benefits from the use of that instrument.

◈ Instrument Repair and Maintenance

- The Director contacts the Coordinator of Music Education to request instrument repair.
- Once permission is granted, the Director is responsible for coordinating the repair with a local repair technician.

◈ Inventory

- All equipment currently in use must be included in the music department's inventory.
- Music instructors update the inventory software with any changes in the location of instruments.
- Music instructors perform a physical inventory at least annually, near the end of the school year. A thorough and accurate inventory must be submitted electronically to the Coordinator of Music Education by June 30th each school year.
- Music instructors notate in the inventory software and inform the Music Office about any lost, stolen, or missing instruments and equipment.

◈ Adjudication Leave

- If a teacher is going to adjudicate or act as a clinician or guest conductor and will receive a stipend for services, discretionary leave is used.
- A teacher may apply for only two assignments per school year.
- Requests must be made to the Superintendent in writing prior to the absence.

Pep Band

- The Band Director and principal determine the frequency of Pep Band performances throughout the year, using the Montana Band Master Association's recommendation of 16 performances as a guideline.
- The principal and/or Activities Coordinator coordinate, along with the coaches and band directors, the performance schedule. Generally, the Pep Band plays at cross town games.
- Any length of appearance (full game, partial game, half-time, or pre-game) counts as one appearance.
- During the regular season, the number of appearances at boys' events must equal the number of appearances at girls' events, not including pep assemblies.
- Pep assemblies honoring both boys' and girls' sports at the same assembly are equitable. Special sendoff assemblies, if held, must be conducted for both boys' and girls' teams.
- Pep bands are not required to perform at any athletic events that occur during the MMEA/All-State Festival weekend.

Post Season Travel

- If the school's team qualifies, the Pep Band performs at local boys' and girls' State Basketball Tournaments. Additionally, the Pep Band plays at in-town football playoff games, and home divisional volleyball and basketball tournaments. There may also be requests for the Pep Band to perform at the state wrestling tournament.
- The district Activities Office pays for busing.
- To promote consistency and equity among the various programs and schools, general music ECA funds are not used for tournament travel.
- ECA accounts specifically for funding Pep Band travel may be established. Funds could be supplied through such things as donations, shares of activity tickets, etc. Pep Band members are not required to engage in fund-raising activities to pay for travel expenses.
- If district funds are budgeted for Pep Band travel to post-season state tournament games, the following criteria applies:
  - A maximum of one bus is used.
  - Pep Band travels to the game and back without overnight lodging if distance and circumstances allow.
  - If overnight accommodations are necessary, reservations are made by the district Activities Office.
  - To reduce the impact on school time and expenses, Pep Band performances at out-of-town state tournaments are restricted to Fridays and Saturdays only.
- By September 1 of each school year, Pep Band Directors and the principal review the upcoming year's activity schedule and determine whether or not the Pep Band will travel to post-season events. If the Pep Band participates in the state basketball or volleyball tournaments, the Pep Band Director makes hotel reservations for overnight stays and arranges for bus transportation through the district Transportation Office. These arrangements should be made as soon as possible after deciding they will attend.

Soccer

Soccer rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Soccer section. MHSA Handbook - Soccer

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- Crosstown games are played on the turf field at Amend Park. All other games are played on the grass fields at Amend Park. First and second round playoff games are played on the grass fields with the hopes of scheduling semi-final and championship games on the turf field.
- Post season expenses are allotted for 22 persons total, consisting of 20 players and 2 coaches.

Softball

Softball rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Softball section. MHSA Handbook - Softball

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- The season includes a cross conference jamboree in Great Falls. Each team gets two non-conference games scheduled against opponents from the opposite division who have a similar seed at the time of the jamboree. None of these games count in conference standings or are used in a tie breaker.
- Up to 6 additional non-conference games are scheduled. These non-conference games do apply to tie breaker procedures.
- Bats are certified at the beginning of the year and re-certified at the state tournament.
- Post season expenses are allotted for 21 persons total, consisting of 17 players, 2 coaches, and 2 managers.

Swimming

Swimming rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Swimming section. MHSA Handbook – Swimming

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- To participate, a student-participant must know how to swim and be advanced enough for competition.
- Due to limited pool space and time, a limited number of participants are selected each year.
- Schools rotate the responsibility of arranging workers for home contests. Signup sheets are given out at the pre-season coaches meeting and must be returned with all workers signed up prior to the first home competition.
- Practices take place at the pool at MSUB.
- A maximum of 32 swimmers are entered in each event for the AA State Swim Meet.
- Student-participants who wish to participate in an out-of-state event during the season must receive approval from the MHSA. Meets approved by the MHSA count against the student-participant's 10 regular season meet limit. Contact the Director of Athletics and Activities to start the process.

Tennis

Tennis rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Tennis section. MHSA Handbook - Tennis

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- To try out for an SD2 tennis team, a student must have some experience playing and be advanced enough for competition.
- The divisional tournament is held in Billings.
- The top 4 singles student-participants and top 4 doubles team from each divisional tournament advance to the state tournament.

Track and Field

Track and Field rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Track & Field section. MHSA Handbook - Track & Field

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- Each head coach must enter the qualifying athletes using Athletic.net by the established deadline. Entries will not be accepted after the deadline.
- Student-participants who wish to participate in a meet unattached from their team must receive approval from the MHSA. Meets approved by the MHSA count against the student-participant's 10 regular season meet limit. Contact the Director of Athletics and Activities to start the process.

Volleyball

Volleyball rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Volleyball section. MHSA Handbook - Volleyball

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

Post Season

- Post season expenses are allotted for 22 persons total, consisting of 1 head coach; 3 assistant coaches, 1 (or 2) volunteer coaches, 1 trainer, 2 managers, 12 players, and 2 alternates.
- Additional expenses are covered by the school's ECA upon principal approval.
- In the event a team does not qualify for the playoffs or state Tournament, the head coach is allowed to attend the event and have the following expenses paid:
  - Transportation, meals, substitute, lodging, and tickets.
  - Only a ticket is provided for the coach's spouse. The coach is required to cover all other expenses.
  - If the tournament is held in Billings, two additional tickets are provided for members of the coaching staff and subs are provided for SD2 coaches.

Wrestling

Wrestling rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations under the Wrestling section. MHSA Handbook - Wrestling

Additionally, applicable rules are found in the Montana AA Conference Handbook.

The following BPS also rules apply:

- The State Wrestling Tournament is held in Billings at Metra. The following guidelines apply to the state tournament:
  - Each student-participant who qualifies for the state tournament receives a pass.
  - A maximum of 4 manager passes are allotted per school, 2 per gender. These are for student team managers only, not coaches' wives or children.
  - One pass is allotted for each cheerleader who performs at the tournament.
  - Bands and other music groups receive passes upon arrival for their performance.
  - Schools can use their ECA account to purchase additional passes for spouses and family members as requested by the coaching staff and approved by the Activities Coordinator.
  - Floor access is allowed for the head coach and four assistant coaches. No other assistant coaches are allowed on the floor.
  - Only two individuals are allowed in each mat corner during state tournament matches. These individuals can be two coaches or one coach and one manager.
  - Wrestlers eliminated from the State tournament must sit in the stands and are not allowed on the floor.
  - Schedules are sent to the MHSA prior to the start of the season to verify the 50% rule.

Scheduling

Participation Conflicts

There may be instances where student-participants are involved in multiple activities and a timing conflict arises. Participation conflicts are resolved based on the following criteria:

- Activity performances are prioritized over practices, with no undue pressure or threat of exclusion by either sponsor in case of conflicts.
- For performance conflicts between BPS activities, the student is allowed to make the choice with no undo pressure or threat of exclusion by either sponsor.
- If the student chooses to miss a classroom event, such as a music concert that has an impact on the student's grade, the sponsor must give the student a "reasonable" alternate assignment. This assignment must be tied to the learning objectives of the class the student will miss.
- BPS events have priority over non-BPS events unless prior arrangements have been made with the coach or sponsor.

Scheduling District Facilities

The following guidelines are used when scheduling facilities:

- First priority is given to SD2 activities and personnel over outside groups.
- Scheduling decisions are based on what best serves the greatest number of people.
- MHSA sanctioned events have priority over non-sanctioned events.
- Competition schedules have priority over practice schedules.
- In-season activities have priority over out-of-season activities.
- Higher level activities (e.g., varsity) have priority over lower-level activities (e.g., freshman).
- Pre-scheduled activities have priority over "last minute" activities.
- Equity is maintained in scheduling of facilities.

Each in-season coach or sponsor is responsible for attending the weekly (or monthly) building activities meeting scheduled by the Activities Coordinator. At that time, practice and game schedules are discussed and scheduled.

The Activities Coordinator schedules locker room facilities in advance and informs the PE teachers of gym and field schedules.

Requests for building facilities by outside groups not affiliated with BPS, must be scheduled through the Facility Rentals page of the district website.

Scheduling events at Daylis Stadium is handled by the Director of Athletics and Activities.

Scheduling Practices and Events

Practices and events rules for MHSA coaches are defined in the MHSA Rules and Regulations [Section (7) Coaching/Practice Regulations, Section D].

In addition, the following BPS rules apply:

- The welfare and safety of the student-participants and staff is the top priority.
- Wednesday night is reserved for family night during which no competitions are scheduled unless it cannot be avoided due to canceled events or other scheduling circumstances.
- Home and away agreements are always honored.
- Budget limitations must be considered.
- Competitions always have priority over practices.
- Equity is maintained between schools and equivalent programs.

Equipment

- Certain activities require the student-participants to purchase equipment, such as jerseys. These items are ordered in bulk by SD2 and offered to student-participants at cost.
- Equity with the quality and quantity of equipment is maintained among the various activities, in particular with safety and protective equipment.
- Student-participants may be required to purchase equipment such as shoes, practice jerseys and other practice gear, travel attire, equipment bags, etc. The student-participant keeps these items at the conclusion of the season.
- Taking deposits for school-owned gear issued during the season is not allowed.
- Equipment provisions for each activity is determined by the head coach and the Activities Coordinator.
- Student-participants are responsible for all equipment checked out to them. A fee is charged to the student-participant for any loss or damage.
- Due to liability and inventory considerations, school uniforms may not be loaned for student use in non-school sponsored events such as camps, clinics, or out-of-season competitions.

Generally, the equipment provisions for each high school program are as follows:

Activity	**Supplied by school**	**Supplied by student-participant**
Baseball	Game uniform, batting helmets, protective equipment & catchers gear	Shoes, sweat gear, practice gear, glove, & other necessities
Basketball	Game uniform & warm-ups	Practice shorts, shoes, socks, & other necessities
Cross Country	Meet uniform	Practice gear, shoes, & socks
Flag Football	Game uniform	Practice jersey, shoes, socks, towel, & mouthpiece
Football	Game jersey, pants, shoulder pads & other protective pads, helmets & accessories	Practice jersey, athletic supporter, shoes, socks, towel, & mouthpiece
Golf	None	All equipment
Music	None	All equipment needed for instrument
Soccer	Game uniform	All other equipment
Softball	Game uniform, batting helmets, protective equipment & catchers gear	Shoes, sweat gear, practice gear, glove, & other necessities
Swimming	None	Swimming suit, protective cap, ear plugs, goggles, & other necessities
Tennis	Uniform	All other equipment
Track	Meet uniform	Shoes, sweat gear, practice shorts, shirt, & other necessities
Volleyball	Game jersey	Practice jersey, socks, knee pads, & shorts/spandex
Wrestling	Singlet, head gear	Socks, shoes, knee pads, practice gear, & sweats

Equipment Requests



Requests for equipment and supplies are completed at the end of each season. Generally high school purchases are handled by the school Activities Office. The Equipment Request Form must be completed before the purchase is made. The building principal and Activities Coordinator approve the requests.

For middle schools, the Equipment Request Google Form must be completed. The completed form is submitted to the building principal for approval and then sent to the district Activities Office for ordering.

The Equipment Request Forms are found on the district website under the Coaches icon on the Activities page.

Equipment Inventories

Equipment inventories are completed by the head coach or sponsor at the end of each season. Copies are provided to the building Activities Coordinator and school principal.

The Activities Coordinator is responsible for keeping inventories up to date and on file.

The inventory contains the following items:

- Date inventory was taken
- Location of the inventory
- List of major equipment and uniforms including a general description and condition of each item and the number of items in inventory
- Signature of the person completing the inventory

Uniform Rotation

Varsity uniform purchases are made on a "2-year on, 1-year off" rotation, with the exception of football, track, and cross country. Football, track, and cross country uniforms are generally purchased every six years. As long as funds are available through either the individual program ECA or school Activities ECA, a varsity program can purchase home uniforms one year, followed by away uniforms the next year, followed by a year without uniform purchases. If sufficient funds are available, the program can buy home and away uniforms at the same time but uniforms cannot be purchased again for the next two years. It is not permissible to purchase uniforms every year just because ECA funds are available.

Used varsity uniforms are passed down to the lower levels, though occasionally, transferring uniforms may not be practical, necessitating the purchase of new lower-level uniforms. If funds permit, the Director of Athletics and Activities can grant approval to the principal and Activities Coordinator to purchase uniforms for freshmen or sophomore teams.

Equipment Disposal

Montana State Law does not allow any district-owned equipment, regardless of condition, to be sold or given away by any individual coach or sponsor once it is no longer needed.

Equipment that is no longer needed or used must be sent to the Warehouse for proper disposal or auctioning off in accordance with district procedures and state law.

Travel

Substitutes

The district Activities Office arranges for substitutes for all approved events as determined by the Activities Coordinator, building principal, and the Director of Athletics and Activities. The Activities Coordinator assesses the need for a substitute based on factors such as the away game location, departure time, and any special circumstances, with approval from the Director of Athletics and Activities.

Follow these steps to make a substitute request:

- Complete the Sub Request and Rooming List form on the Google drive. It is preferable to have the Sub List completed for the entire season prior to the first practice; however, if this is not possible, it must be completed a minimum of two weeks prior to the absence.
- The head coach or sponsor assists the Activities Coordinator in ensuring that substitute needs for assistant coaches are entered on the request form.
- Should changes occur, coaches and sponsors are responsible for notifying the district Activities Office or the building substitute clerk.
- Substitutes are not provided for SD2 employees who are volunteer coaches.
- Head or assistant coaches who coach in a building other than their teaching location are responsible for informing their building principal of scheduled absences so they are aware of substitutes in their building.

Lodging

- Lodging is arranged by the district Activities Office.
- The Sub Request and Rooming List Google doc is used to enter rooming list information.
- Complete the rooming lists a minimum of two weeks prior to an overnight trip. While the exact participants to each event may not be confirmed, the list still must be completed in order to secure rooms. Changes to participant names can be made closer to the time of departure. Failure to complete the rooming list in a timely manner may result in rooms not being booked.
- Coaches and sponsors inform student-participants of the rules to follow in the motel (see section titled “Overnight Trips Expectations”).

Overnight Trips Expectations

Student-participants representing School District #2 are required to adhere to the following when student trips require overnight lodging:

- Student-participants are given a curfew to be in assigned rooms by the coach/sponsor. Failure by the student-participant to be present in the room at curfew results in an immediate suspension from the activity for the remainder of the trip or competition.
- A student-participant who leaves an assigned room after curfew is suspended from the activity for the remainder of the trip and remains suspended indefinitely until a review is performed by the appropriate administrator(s).
- A student-participant who enters a room after curfew where members of the opposite gender are staying receives a suspension for the remainder of the activity or event. Additionally, they face permanent suspension from the activity for the remainder of the year. Student-participants shall not enter rooms where members of the opposite gender are staying at any time unless the coach/sponsor is also present in the room.
- At no time are student-participants allowed to have anyone who is not directly involved in the activity in their room without consent from the coach or sponsor. Student-participants who

allow others to enter their rooms without permission from the coach/sponsor are suspended from that activity for the remainder of the trip.

- Any violation of School District #2 policy or state or federal laws results in the immediate suspension from the activity and are reviewed by School District #2 administration for possible expulsion.
- Student-participants who violate the Code of Conduct are not allowed to participate in the event(s) and may be sent home with their parents, depending on the individual situation.
- Bullying and harassment incidents, such as making freshmen carry older kids' bags or requiring younger kids sleep on the floor, are not tolerated. Any allegations of bullying and harassment must be promptly reported and addressed in accordance with School District #2 Policy 3210 on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying.
- Coaches or sponsors inspect rooms at the beginning of the stay to report/note any existing damage in the room. Prior to check out, the rooms are again inspected by the coach or sponsor. Garbage must be picked up and there must be no damage. Student-participants are billed for any damage done to a room or any missing items such as pillows, towels, etc.

Transportation

- Transportation is arranged by the district Activities Office.
- Departure time is determined by destination, event start time, missed school time, and other special considerations as they arise. Coaches may have input into the departure times.

Standard Bus Departure Times based on first event start time		
Location	**Departure Time**	**Carrier**
Bozeman	4 hours	Jefferson Lines
Belgrade	4 hours	Jefferson Lines
Butte	4.5 hours	Jefferson Lines
Casper, WY	6 hours	Jefferson Lines
Columbus	2 hours	First Student
Great Falls	6 hours	Jefferson Lines
Hardin	2 hours	First Student
Helena	6 hours	Jefferson Lines
Huntley	1.5 hours	First Student
Kalispell	12 hours	Jefferson Lines
Laurel	1.5 hours	First Student
Lockwood	1.5 hours	First Student
Miles City	4 hours	Jefferson Lines
Missoula	8 hours	Jefferson Lines
Shepherd	1.5 hours	First Student
Sheridan, WY	4 hours	Jefferson Lines
Sidney	6 hours	Jefferson Lines
Speech & Debate trips are scheduled to leave at 9 AM the day of the event, unless otherwise scheduled by the coaches.		

- If changes to departure times are needed, the request must be submitted by email to Leslie Croaker two weeks prior to event (unless change is due to weather).
- Charter bus transportation is provided by Jefferson Lines and all buses hold 55 passengers.
- Intra-city trips (including middle school events) and short highway trips use school buses provided by First Student. A standard size bus holds 47 passengers.
- At least one coach must be on board for every trip. Volunteer coaches are not allowed to supervise.
- When travel requires that student-participants of both genders ride in the same bus, the genders are split between the front and back portions of the bus.
- Trip itineraries are prepared for every trip and distributed to participants, parents, school officials, and the transportation company.
- Teams from different schools may be required to travel together as circumstances arise. It is the responsibility of the coaches to cooperate with each other during these times.

Alternate Transportation

Student-participants are required to travel to events on school district provided transportation unless there is an extenuating circumstance. In case of an extenuating circumstance, permission for alternate travel must be granted by completing an Alternate/Return Travel Request Form. The form must be signed by the student-participant, parent/guardian, coach or sponsor, and the school administrator prior to leaving on the trip.

Student-participants have the option to travel home with their parents/guardians. While it is recommended to complete an Alternate/Return Travel Request Form, the coach or sponsor may authorize the release of the student in a face-to-face meeting with the student-participant's parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to departure. At no time are student-participants allowed to travel home with anyone other than their parents/guardians.

Local travel to cross town competitions (except football) or off-site practices is the sole responsibility of the student and parent. Safe travel to practices and competitions is emphasized at all times.

Transportation During Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, the Director of Athletics and Activities gives careful consideration before determining whether to travel or cancel by consulting with other ADs, coaches, administrators, bus drivers, and bus company supervisors. Information is collected from weather and road condition reports, including the National and State Weather Service. The safety of the student-participants and staff is the highest priority.

During travel in inclement weather, the following guidelines apply:

- Student-participants dress appropriately by bringing hats, gloves, and coats. Bringing a blanket is recommended.
- If the team is on the road and travel is deemed unsafe, the bus stops at the safest available site. The coach instructs the student-participants to contact their parents.
- If continued travel is deemed unsafe, the bus returns to the closest available site, and arranges for motel rooms for an overnight stay.
- If the bus gets stranded, the driver and coaches follow first aid and safety requirements and contact emergency personnel as appropriate.
- If a trip is not canceled and the student-participant's parents feel strongly against travel, the student-participant can be kept home without penalty.

Roadside Safety Procedures

- The bus pulls off the road as far as possible.
- Help the driver place warning devices, such as safety triangle reflectors and flags, making the vehicle as visible as possible.
- If possible, contact emergency personnel, a school administrator, the Director of Athletics and Activities, and allow student-participants to call parents.
- Stay in the bus until emergency personnel allow departure.

In Case of an Accident

- Call 911.
- Make the vehicle as visible as possible by using safety triangle reflectors and flags.
- One coach/adult checks the safety of the bus. If leaks, drips, or anything concerning are noted, evacuate the bus if appropriate.
- Coaches and adults check for injuries and get everyone to a safe location. Coaches and sponsors are certified in first-aid and act as first responders, if needed.
- Once everyone is safe and emergency personnel have arrived and secured the area, student-participants call their parents. A coach calls the school administrator and the Director of Athletics and Activities.
- If calls can't be made from the site, the school administrators call parents.
- Any person on the bus who indicates they are injured are checked by medical personnel. It is preferable to have the injured person transported to the hospital by ambulance rather than discover an injury has occurred later.
- Put a plan in place to ensure student-participants are safely returned home. Contact school administration and the bus company to get input on making plans.
- If necessary, allow student-participants to be transported by parents. Student-participants may be allowed to travel home with other student's parents, but only if phone contact is made and permission is given by the parent.
- In case of an accident, obtain accident information from the officers in charge including case numbers, officers, and driver's phone numbers, and any reports that might be available.
- Provide information to the Director of Athletics and Activities, School Principal(s) and Superintendent.
- Refer media interview requests to the Superintendent. In limited circumstances, the head coach may give interviews but it is preferable to refer requests to the Superintendent.
- Activate ICS (Incident Command System) if the situation warrants.
- If deemed appropriate by the Superintendent, schedule and conduct a follow-up parent meeting.

Meals During Travel

The coach or sponsor determines meal arrangements including when, where, and what, even if student-participants are paying for their own meal.

The coach has discretion to decide whether to use ECA funds to cover a meal, have students bring their own food, or pay individually. However, if a program raises funds for meals, it is expected that everyone in the program benefits equally from the ECA fund covering meals. For instance, it is inappropriate to only cover meals for varsity student-participants and not for lower-level student-participants.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Athletics and Activities in conjunction with the Activities Coordinator to ensure that there is equity among programs related to ECA funding of meals.

In the case that ECA funds are paying for a meal, the following guidelines apply:

- The coach sets a spending limit on the cost of an individual meal.
- No funds are spent on drinks. Only water is provided unless the individual wants to purchase a drink with his or her own money.

Staff Travel Reimbursements

Authorized members of BPS Activities staff who travel out of district, other than during scheduled events, are eligible to receive reimbursement for expenses. The following guidelines also apply:

- Travel is approved by the school principal.
- The Travel Reimbursement Form is completed, accompanied with a copy of the approved Leave Request and a copy of the conference agenda and registration.
- Copies of receipts must be turned in.

For travel during scheduled events, coach's meals are paid for by the ECA in the same manner in which meals are paid for the students.

Middle School Program Offerings & Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all middle school programs:

- The duration of each program is 7 weeks.
- Student-participants must attend school and practices to participate in games.
- A student-participant attends for at least the last half of the school day to compete in a contest that day unless the absence was approved by the principal.
- There is a meaningful practice each weekday.
- Each student-participant attends at least 8 days of practice (10 for football) prior to first competition.
- Games begin at 4:30 pm (4:45 pm for football). However, if all team members are present and ready to go prior to game start time, the competition may begin earlier.
- Teams come dressed and ready to play.
- Buses depart from each middle school at 3:45 or 4:00 pm. All student-participants must ride the bus to be eligible to play unless they have prior permission from the principal.
- The coach of the second game rides the bus home unless all student-participants have a verified ride home with their parents.
- Practices must be supervised. The coach is responsible for outlining the rules so that serious injury or damage to equipment is avoided.
- MHSA and NFHS rules apply to middle school activities. The number of players and time limits are the only exceptions.
- Equipment is standardized according to MHSA and National Federation rules.
- Home teams furnish the following:
  - Warm up and game balls
  - Medical equipment and emergency medical procedures
  - Timers, scorers, linesmen, workers, etc.
  - Crowd control
- Coaches are required to play all student-participants. Each member of the team should feel valued and receive sufficient playing time to reflect their importance to the team. While student-participants do not get the same amount of playing time, each should have a meaningful opportunity to contribute. It's unacceptable to sideline student-participants or offer them minimal playing time as a token gesture. Efforts must be made to develop the skills of every student-participant, both individually and as part of the team. Coaches who prioritize competitiveness over giving all student-participants a chance to play cannot work in this system.

SPORT	GRADE	SESSION	BOYS	GIRLS
Basketball - Boys (A, B, & Instructional team)	6, 7, 8	3	X	
Basketball - Girls (A, B, & Instructional team)	6, 7, 8	2		X
Cross Country	6, 7, 8	1	X	X
Football (A and B team)	7, 8	1	X	
Music (Band/Orchestra/Chorus)	6, 7, 8	ALL	X	X
Softball (A and B team)	6, 7, 8	1		X
Track	6, 7, 8	5	X	X
Volleyball (A, B, & Instructional team)	6, 7, 8	4		X
Wrestling	6, 7, 8	2	X	X

Basketball

	BOYS	GIRLS
Start Date	First Monday following Session 2	Mid-October following Session 1
Number per team	10	10
Number of games	10	10
Year-end	A Team only: 6 team single elimination tournament	A Team only: 6 team single elimination tournament
Number of coaches	2	2

The following guidelines apply to both middle school Boys and Girls **Competitive** Basketball programs:

- Games consist of 8-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime. Ten minutes is allowed between games.
- The 3-point shot is in effect.
- The ball used is a regulation size high school basketball.
- Defensive play employs man-to-man only.
- Teams may press until a 10-point lead is achieved.
- Game rules are followed as written for defensive play and pressing.
- It is imperative to communicate the tournament schedule promptly to the team and parents. Announce the tournament pairings and game locations shortly after the end of the regular season.

The following guidelines apply to both middle school Boys and Girls **Instructional** Basketball programs:

- Students not selected for either of the competitive teams are placed on the instructional team.
- Week 1: Tryouts and selections.
  - 10 students on each team are equally divided between 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.
- Weeks 2 & 3: Daily practice sessions.
- Weeks 3, 4, 5, and 6: Practice and games are played after school on nights when competitive teams are away.
  - Practice is held daily during the first two weeks and a minimum of twice per week throughout the season with the exception of game day. In cases of limited gym space due to the number of participants, practices for each group take place at least twice per week (e.g., Group 1 Monday & Wednesday, Group 2 Tuesday & Thursday).
  - Game times are as follows:
    - 3:45 pm - 4:30 pm
    - 4:40 pm - 5:25 pm
    - 5:35 pm - 6:20 pm
    - 6:30 pm - 7:15 pm
    - 7:25 pm - 8:10 pm
  - Games have a 45-minute time limit. There is no set minimum or maximum, only a 45-minute time limit.
  - All participants get equal playing time. It is recommended that groups of five rotate in and out of games at five minute intervals.
  - Coaches referee their own games. Coaches guide teams through their games while refereeing.
- For schools with an odd number of teams, one team plays twice on a given night, rotating from week to week.

- On the final night of the season, three schools are bussed to play at a site with a similar number of teams. Teams are matched according to their standings at their school. For example, BS1 plays CR1, BS2 plays CR2 etc. The game format is the same as the regular season.
- Coaches are assigned at a graduated rate as follows:
  - 1-20 Participants = 1 coach
  - 21-50 Participants = 2 coaches
  - 51-90 Participants = 3 coaches
  - 91+ Participants = 4 coaches
- It is recommended that the following positions be filled at the beginning of the school year:

	BOYS	GIRLS
Ben Steele	2	2
Castle Rock	2	2
Lewis & Clark	2	1
Medicine Crow	2	1
Riverside	2	1
Will James	2	2

  - Additional coaches are hired at the beginning of the season when participant numbers have been determined.
- There are no specified Gym Coordinators. The building gym coordinator is responsible for setting up the clock & bleachers. Coaches & students put away equipment at the end of the night.
- A faculty member is responsible for crowd control and to mitigate issues with students and fans (assigned by Administrator). The Extra Duty & Activity Time Sheet must be sent to the Activities Office on a monthly basis.
- Students (players waiting or managers) or staff run the clock and score during the games.

Cross Country

Start Date	First day of school
Number per team	Max 10 on Varsity; unlimited on JV
Number of meets	5
Year-end	County Meet
Number of coaches	2

The following guidelines apply to the middle school Cross Country program:

- All grade levels run a 2-mile course.
- Runners on Varsity must be able to complete a 2-mile course in 20 minutes or less, regardless of grade; runners who complete 2-miles in over 20 minutes are junior varsity, regardless of grade.
- Athlete entry is done in Athletic.net prior to registration deadline.
- Team t-shirt must be worn at each meet.
- Student-participants provide their own equipment, including running shoes.
- Coaches assign practice areas that allow for the greatest amount of direct supervision and safety from nearby vehicle traffic.
- Automatic timing is provided by Competitive Timing for all meets.
- Each school provides two workers at each meet.

- Ribbons are awarded to the top 15 places for regular meets. Medals for places 1-10 are awarded at the Middle School County Meet.

Football

Start Date	First day of school
Number per team	Unlimited
Number of games	5 - 6
Year-end	A Team only – playoffs and championship game
Number of coaches	4

The following guidelines apply to the middle school football program:

- Game field arrangements are made by the principal, associate principal, or designee.
- An intermediate sized football is used.
- Mouthpieces are worn by student-participants during all practices and games. New mouthpieces are fitted each year.
- Only the following people are authorized to be on the sidelines:
  - Coaches and squad members in football uniforms
  - Managers authorized by coaches.

Note: Coach's children are not allowed on the sidelines during a game due to the potential for injury.

- Each school is allotted one head coach and three assistant coaches.
- Football jerseys, used for both games and practices, are purchased by the middle schools and sold to student-participants at cost. There are no refunds.
- Student-participants are responsible for providing their own shoes.
- Helmet safety is essential and the Helmet Use Warning Form must be reviewed carefully and signed by the athletes and parents.
- Each school has one team consisting of an "A" squad and a "B" squad.
- If there are enough participants, each team starts 11 people on offense and 11 different players on defense. A player may be substituted during that time but only by someone who did not start. These 22 players play the whole first half on either offense or defense. After half-time, coaches can substitute freely while playing as many student-participants as possible.
- Games consist of four 10-minute quarters using regular timing procedures. A minimum of two officials are used. Half-times are five minutes long.
- A running clock is utilized when a team leads by 35 points or more. If the lead falls below 35 points, the clock resumes normal operations. The clock stops during timeouts and after a score.
- "B" Games – Coaches are required to meet prior to the start of each game to discuss any special situations concerning student-participants.
  - If there are enough players, 22 different players must start and all players must play.
  - "B" games are not to be used as an excuse for not playing a player in an "A" game.
- Starters in the "A" game cannot suit up and play in "B" games. If a "B" team finds itself short of players and needs to supplement the roster using some of the "A" team players, notify the Director of Athletics and Activities before the "B" game starts. Student-participants from the "A" team who participate in the "B" game are not allowed to play the majority of the "B" games. This is meant to ensure that all middle school football student-participants feel included and valued within the activity.

SCORING					
Touchdown	6	Safety	2	PAT pass/run	1
Field goal	3	PAT kick	2	Tie	MT playoff

Music

Start Date	First day of school
Number per team	Unlimited

- Student-participants provide their own supplies for their instrument, such as reeds, valve oil, rosin, and strings.
- Permission may be granted for one performance-oriented trip outside of Yellowstone County per year. This opportunity is available exclusively to 8th grade student groups and any seventh graders who are active participants in those groups. Approval for such trips is determined by the principal, the Coordinator of Music Education, and the Superintendent. Bus requests must be submitted well in advance and arrangements are handled by the district Transportation Office.
- Music instructors recommend students for auditions to the director of each honor organization. Selections are based on ability, and students must be in good standing within their school's music organization to participate. Performance at these additional events is not required of the student-participants in the honor groups.

	Who is eligible to audition	**Fee**
Band	6th graders	$55 (includes fee for Spring tour)
Chorus	4th – 6th graders	
Orchestra	6th – 9th graders	

Softball

Start Date	First day of school
Number per team	15
Number of games	9
Year-end	A Team only – single elimination tournament
Number of coaches	2

The following guidelines apply to the middle school softball program:

- Two teams consist of the following:
  - A Team - 9 players with no extra batters (DP Flex – optional)
  - B Team - 10 players and all bat (may split roster into 2 innings)
- Each game consists of seven innings.
- The time limit is one hour and thirty minutes, after which the current inning is completed and the game ends.
- The ten-run rule after five innings applies to all games.
- Players are responsible for providing their own pants, shoes/cleats, socks, and glove.
- No metal cleats are allowed.

Track & Field

Start Date	Monday following session #4

Number per team	Unlimited
Number of meets	5 (including City Meet)
Year-end	7th & 8th grade City Meet; 6th grade City Meet
Number of coaches	7

The following guidelines apply to the middle school track program:

- 1/4" spikes required on middle school tracks and 1/8" spikes required at high school tracks.
- The season track numbers are assigned as follows:

	Track numbers
Ben Steele	750 – 899
Castle Rock	450-599
Lewis & Clark	150-299
Medicine Crow	600 – 749
Riverside	300-449
Will James	0-149

- MHSA rules regarding uniforms and undergarments are in force. Coaches ensure student-participants, meet officials, and event judges are aware of these rules and enforce them.
  - Uniform Rule: Student-participants must wear the school issued uniform t-shirt and black shorts. T-shirt is full length and hang below or be tucked into the waistband when the student-participant is standing upright. Shoes must be on both feet and designed so that it can be fastened securely to the foot. Slippers or socks are not acceptable. Black shorts may have a single manufacturer's logo/ trademark /reference, no more than 2 ¼".
  - Undergarments Rule: Any visible garment(s) worn underneath the uniform top must be of a single, solid color. Undergarments may have a single visible manufacturer's logo/ trademark/reference, no more than 2 ¼". Visible items worn under both the top and the bottom may be different colors. If two undergarments are worn under the top or the bottom, they must be the same color.
  - Student-participants who violate the undergarments and/or uniform rules receive a warning and are allowed to compete in the first two meets of the season. After the first two meets, violations of the undergarments and/or uniform rule results in disqualification.
- When hosting an event, the coach communicates with the other schools ahead of time to inform them where their coaches will be stationed.
- At the completion of the meet, all student-participants help pick up all garbage around the track and infield.
- If the City meet is canceled, every attempt will be made to reschedule it within the seven-week timeframe. If rescheduling within that period is not feasible, the season may be extended until a suitable date is found.
- In the event of inclement weather where the meet is canceled, rescheduling is attempted in consultation with school principals.
- In case of thunder and/or lightning, immediately relocate student-participants to a sheltered area (gym). Monitor the lightning activity and wait 30 minutes from the last sighting before returning to the field.

Field Events

- When hosting an event, the host school long jump and high jumpers may start while waiting for the other schools' buses to arrive. If there are a large number of student-participants in any other field events, those events may be started as well.
- Shot, discus, and long jump competitors are given three (3) attempts with no finals. If time becomes limited, each competitor is given two (2) attempts. In the City Meet, finals are held and competitors get 3 additional attempts.
- Student-participants are limited to 5 events, 3 field and 2 running, or 2 field and 3 running. At least one running event must be a relay; athlete is allowed to run both relays.
- Each school is allowed to enter 5 student-participants in running events and 6 student-participants in field events.
- Student-participants may not run more than two races longer than 400 meters.
- During the first two meets of the season, a false start is signified by a second shot from the starter's gun. The offending competitor is warned and given a second opportunity. A second false start results in disqualification from the event. Beginning with the third meet, false starts result in disqualification from the event.

HIGH JUMP STARTING HEIGHTS	
Boys Grade 6 & 7	4'0"
Boys Grade 8	4'4"
Girls Grade 6 & 7	3'8"
Girls Grade 8	3'10"

Hurdles

- 82-meter hurdles: Eight hurdles, 27' apart, 45' from start to first hurdle, 36' from last hurdle to finish line, 30" high for boys and girls.
- Curb mark colors: 82-meter, white; 165-meter, blue; 128-meter, blue.

Middle School Regular Season Duals

RUNNING EVENTS			
Time	Event	Grade	Gender
4:30 pm	1600 Meter Run	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
4:50 pm	100-Meter Hurdles – 30"	7, 8	Girls/Boys
5:10 pm	100 Meter Dash	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
5:40 pm	400 Meter Dash	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
6:00 pm	400 Meter Relay	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
6:15 pm	800 Meter Run	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
6:40 pm	200 Meter Dash	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
7:00 pm	1600 Meter Relay	6, 7, 8	Girls/Boys
FIELD EVENTS			
4:30 pm	Shot Put	6, 7, 8	Girls
	Discus	6, 7, 8	Boys
	High Jump	6, 7, 8	Girls
	Long Jump	6, 7, 8	Boys
5:30 pm	Shot Put	6, 7, 8	Boys

	Discus	6, 7, 8	Girls
	High Jump	6, 7, 8	Boys
	Long Jump	6, 7, 8	Girls

Volleyball

Start Date	First Monday following Session #3
Number per team	12
Number of games	10
Year-end	A Team only – single elimination tournament
Number of coaches	2

The following guidelines apply to the middle school **Competitive** volleyball program:

- 12 girls per team (A and B teams) with 8 active players in each game (24 girls per school).
- Two games are played simultaneously with one MOA "up" official.
- The remaining players (4 per team) either line judge or keep score.
- Court size varies depending on the home team but games are set-up for one lengthwise court.
- Matches are scheduled for a double header.
- At least 1 MOA official provided for each match.
- Teams play best two of three games to 25, rally score. Game 3 is played to score of 15.
- Each team gets two timeouts for the first two games and one timeout for the last game.
- Teams may use a libero but must provide their own libero tracker.
- Underhand or overhand serve may be used.
- Warm-ups:
  - 12-minute warm-up prior to the start of each match.
  - 4-4-2-2 with alternating court time starting with home teams.
- The end-of-season tournament is seeded as soon as possible after the regular season.
- The head coach of the host team is responsible for set up, take down, and player-worker assignments. When available, a high school student with volleyball experience serves as assistant coach. There are no gym coordinators.
- Each team plays two games per session with each student-participant guaranteed at least one game. Over the course of the season, each student-participant gets a minimum of 5 games.
- Student-participant goals:
  - I can pass and serve
  - I can rotate without direction and identify the server
  - I can locate the setter and position myself accordingly

The following guidelines apply to the middle school **Instructional** volleyball program:

- Students not selected for either of the competitive teams are placed on the instructional team.
- Week 1: Tryouts and selections.
  - 10 students on each team equally divided amongst 6th, 7th, and 8th graders.
  - All participants get equal playing time. It is recommended that groups of five rotate in and out of games at five minute intervals.
- Weeks 2 & 3: Daily practice sessions.
- Weeks 3, 4, 5, and 6: Practice and games are played after school on nights when competitive teams are away.
  - Practice is held daily during the first two weeks and a minimum of twice per week throughout the season with the exception of game day. In case of limited gym space due

to the number of participants, practices for each group take place at least twice per week (e.g., Group 1 Monday & Wednesday, Group 2 Tuesday & Thursday).
    - Game times are as follows:
        - 3:45 pm - 4:30 pm
        - 4:40 pm - 5:25 pm
        - 5:35 pm - 6:20 pm
        - 6:30 pm - 7:15 pm
        - 7:25 pm - 8:10 pm
    - Games have a 45-minute time limit with no set minimum or maximum.
    - Coaches referee their own games & guide teams through their games at the same time.
- For schools with an odd number of teams, one team plays twice on a given night, rotating from week to week.
- On the final night of the season, three schools play at a site with a similar number of teams. Teams are matched according to their standings at their school. For example, BS1 will play CR1, BS2 will play CR2 etc. The game format is the same as the regular season.
- Coaches are assigned at a graduated rate as follows:
    - 1-20 Participants = 1 coach
    - 21-50 Participants = 2 coaches
    - 51-90 Participants = 3 coaches
    - 91+ Participants = 4 coaches
- It is recommended to fill the following positions at the beginning of the school year.
    - Ben Steele: 2
    - Castle Rock: 1
    - Lewis & Clark: 2
    - Medicine Crow: 1
    - Riverside: 1
    - Will James: 2
    - Additional coaches are hired at the beginning of the season once participant numbers have been determined.
- There are no specified Gym Coordinators. The building gym coordinator sets up the clock and bleachers. Coaches and students put away the equipment at the end of the night.
- A faculty member is responsible for crowd control and to mitigate issues with students and fans (assigned by Administrator). Extra Duty & Activity Time Sheet must be sent to the Activities Office on a monthly basis.
- Students (players waiting or managers) or staff run the clock and score during the games.

Wrestling

Start Date	Mid-October after Session #1
Number per team	Unlimited
Number of meets	5
Year-end	City Prelims and City Meet
Number of coaches	2

The following guidelines apply to the middle school wrestling program:

- The mats are scrubbed daily with disinfectant and removed for storage in a location agreed upon by the school's principal.

- A student-participant is not permitted to return to practice or competition after contracting a contagious disease or serious injury without a doctor's permission slip.
- Singlets are provided by the school for meets and used in competitions; student-participants cannot use their own.
- Student-participants wear wrestling headgear for all practices and competitions.
- One SD2 sponsored weekend meet is allowed per school.
- Weigh-ins are supervised by coaches. Student-participants weigh in wearing their singlet.
- Weight is certified by an administrator at the first official weigh-in at each school.
- Student-participants must make weight following the last practice before each meet. Wrestlers may not wrestle for the rest of the season in a weight class lower than certified at the official weigh-in. A one-pound growth allowance is permitted halfway through the season as is an additional pound at the county tournament.
- Student-participants must be within 10 pounds of each other to be paired. A student-participant may wrestle up one weight class. Coaches use their discretion when pairing heavyweights.
- Student-participants are warmed up and ready to compete as soon as the previous match is completed.
- An official coach is present at each site during competition.
- Weight Divisions include: 63-68-73-78-83-88-93-98-105-112-118-125-130-135-140-145-152-160-171-189-275
- Matches consist of three one-minute periods with overtimes of three 30-second periods.
- Meet officials are MOA officials.
- Coaches must be seated at the mat corners during matches. During the city tournament, two coaches from each school are allowed on the mat.
- Should a controversy arise over rules and scoring, the situation is handled by the officials and coaches. Spectators are not allowed to be involved.
- Mat scores are kept on a flip scorer, chalkboard, or scoreboard.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior of coaches or student-participants is penalized immediately.
- Coaches attend the scheduled coaches pairing meetings. This is a developmental program and student-participants are matched by skill as well as weight. An attempt is made to ensure every student-participant has some level of success. Schools not having a representative at the pairing meeting are not allowed to participate.
- The coach instructs the wrestlers in proper dieting and nutritional techniques.

City Meet

- To be seeded into the meet, student-participants must have wrestled the majority of the matches in their seeded weight class.
- Ribbons are awarded to the top four finishers in each of the 6th, 7th, 8th grade and girls weight classes.
- Bracket boards are awarded to the champion of each weight class.
- Tournament workers are provided by the host school with help from other schools. Timers, scorers, announcers, awards presenter, and mat and towel attendants are divided between all schools.

Extra-Curricular Accounts (ECA) Funds

- ECA program money raised is spent in such a manner as to impact student-participants:
  - To purchase merchandise and equipment for the team
  - To purchase meals while traveling
  - To pay for other team related activities, e.g., taking the team bowling as a team building activity
  - To pay for alternate travel opportunities that allow more participants to take the bus, e.g., paying for an extra bus or paying for assistant coaches to drive themselves
  - To pay for general professional development opportunities for coaches, e.g., clinic expenses (travel, lodging, clinic fees) or educational materials being mindful that these professional development expenses should never come at the expense of the program
  - ECA funds cannot be spent on non-district events such as summer camps or tournaments with the exception of Cheer, Dance, Music and Clubs/Organizations
  - ECA money cannot be spent to purchase clothing for coaches
- Funds generated by any group representing Billings Public Schools are deposited into a Billings Public Schools board approved ECA Account. Funds are deposited promptly upon receipt. An employee is not permitted to hold any cash or checks for their designated club or organization.
- District events that involve cash exchange at the door of the event (e.g., dances, concerts, or sporting events) must have a cash box checked out from the school Activities Secretary. Numbered tickets are required and a log of beginning/ending ticket numbers is maintained.
- Cash is placed in a SD2 safe following the event; the cash box may not be taken home after an event. At the end of the day's event, the ticket seller reconciles the sales amounts and signs off, verifying the amount. The cash is deposited with the school Activities Secretary the next school day.
- The use of the Billings Public Schools Federal Tax ID number for individual bank accounts is prohibited.
- Purchases over $2500 require bids from 3 separate vendors prior to purchase.
- District authorized purchases are done by Purchase Order or P-card.
- School district employees in violation of any of these policies or procedures face disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Program Financial File Guidelines

In order to meet the ECA guidelines of reporting, the following list of items must be included in each program's ECA file, accessible during a review or audit:

- Fundraiser Approval Form – Completed and signed by the principal.
- Fundraiser Report Form – Including fundraiser expenses, total amount earned, and total amount deposited.
- Equipment Request Form – Equipment purchases must be preapproved and signed by an administrator or Activities Coordinator, including purchases made using a P-card.
- Running Account Ledger – includes chronological list of all account activity including deposits, P-card or purchase order deductions, and a short description of each activity.
- P-Card Request Form with attached receipt.

P-cards

- Read and follow all P-card policies and procedures.
- Users of the P-card read and complete the BPS User Agreement. The original copy of the User Agreement is signed and sent to the Procurement Manager at the Lincoln Center.
- P-cards are locked in a secure location.

- Activities Coordinators are provided a district P-card for daily and emergency use.
- Head coaches can check out a P-card from the school Activities Secretary either prior to the season or prior to each trip. These cards are not to be used for personal use under any circumstance.
- Copies of all receipts are given to the school Activities Secretary upon return.
- If student-participants are traveling for an event, the P-card is used for meal purchases. The coach or sponsor should never give student-participants cash to purchase meals.
- P-cards can be checked out to parents or others who represent a district activity. However, spending must be pre-approved by the head coach or sponsor before use.

Change Fund

Each school may establish a change/petty cash fund to be used for ticket sales, concession stands, or student activities. The amount of change needed is established by the school Activities Office. One person is assigned responsibility of the change fund and that person makes arrangements for check out and check in of the change box.

Supplemental Fund

A supplemental fund was created to assist high schools with purchasing major items that may be cost prohibitive to purchase on their own. Each high school deposits $10,000 into the account each year. The Director of Athletics and Activities and the Activities Coordinators prioritize the major needs of each school and make purchases accordingly.

BPS Scholarship Fund

A district ECA supports students who do not have the financial capability of paying their participation or activity fees. In most circumstances, students should be on the free and reduced lunch plan to qualify for a scholarship. However, special situations are considered.

The BPS Scholarship form is completed to receive a waiver of the participation fee.

Fundraising

Fundraising is not a requirement for student-participants to participate in SD2 programs and does not influence team selection or playing time. Fundraising is encouraged for all, as it aids in supporting teams' operations and resources, such as meals while traveling, equipment, uniforms, incidentals, and professional development for coaches. By emphasizing fundraising as a "goal" rather than a "requirement", the intention is to mitigate any pressure on parents or student-participants. Coaches reinforce this message in team meetings and other communications.

The MHSA Handbook Article II Section (15) Award Rule contains more information.

The following scenarios are in compliance:

- Parent/Booster/Donor/School Groups may raise funds to purchase equipment/uniforms if the school agrees to accept and manage such funds, to inventory and maintain possession of the equipment/uniform purchased, and it follows the district's policy.
- Parent/Booster/Donor/School Groups may raise funds to purchase meals while traveling if the school agrees to accept and to manage such funds and meals are part of the district's policy. A district's meal policy may also contain a "cooler clause" which allows parents or others to provided packed meal for the team(s) while traveling. School policy dictates the handling of meals while traveling.
- Parent/Booster/Donor/School Groups may conduct fundraisers that allow student-participants to earn money individually, provided that only student-participants who actually work are compensated and the compensation is commensurate with the work completed (e.g., number of cars washed, number of discount card sold) or with the number of hours worked. The student-participants may choose to utilize the funds for training apparel provided by the school, etc.
- Schools may provide training apparel for practice and/or workouts that is fully depreciated and has no intrinsic value at the end of the season. These items may be provided by the school and/or its boosters, including general or team fundraisers, provided that the items are school approved and are supplied on a gender-equitable basis. Allowable items are limited to one of each of the following: shooting shirt/warm-up, practice shirt, practice shorts, tights, and a pair of socks.

Note: All of the above are permissible contingent upon all equity rules and standards being met.

The following scenarios are violations:

- Parent/Booster/Donor/School Groups raise funds to buy travel shirts, jackets, polo shirts, or other merchandise that the individual student-participants keep (other than the training apparel noted above).
- A member school, its booster club, or other school-related group sponsors or finances a specialized camp, invitational tournament, or any other event.
- Parent/Booster/Donor/School Groups raise funds in order to give cash in any amount to student-participants for any reason, including but not limited to supplementing or providing their meals on the road.
- A member school, its booster club, or other school-sanctioned group uses fundraised monies for a pre-game team dinner for players, coaches, and/or families.

The following BPS guidelines apply to fundraising efforts:

- Fundraisers are approved by the head coach and the school principal using the Fundraising Approval Request Form.

- District-affiliated organizations are required to keep documentation of any fundraising activities resulting in ECA deposits. This documentation includes how many items were purchased, sold, and remain and needs to be retained for reconciling.
- It is prohibited to solicit voluntary contributions at any MHSA Contest.
- Collections are never to be taken home by the sponsor or his/her representative.
- After each fundraiser, the completed Fundraising Report Form is stored in the school's ECA file.

Booster Clubs

Booster Clubs exist as organizations of parents and interested community persons for the purpose of supporting, encouraging, and advancing the activities program through financial and team support. They are responsible for promoting clean, wholesome school spirit, sportsmanship, and high ideals of character.

Booster Clubs must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Operate according to a written constitution and set of bylaws.
- Promote projects that directly support the activities of the student-participants and coaches who are participating in SD2 Activities Programs.
- Do not attempt to influence or control the technical activities of the school administration or school officials responsible for managing the district activities program.
- Do not violate the rules of the Montana High School Association or in any way jeopardize the membership of the school, the district, or the eligibility of any student-participant.
- Work closely with the building principal, Activities Coordinators, and Director of Athletics and Activities in planning appropriate activities and events.

Financial support provided by the Booster Clubs must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Funds spent by Booster Clubs in support of activities are subject to the equity requirements of the MHSA, the Ridgeway Settlement, and Title IX. All monies spent must be approved by the building principal and/or the Director of Athletics and Activities.
- Funds received and/or used by booster clubs that are for the benefit of the school district or its students must be deposited and maintained in school district accounts.
- Funds are spent according to district purchasing guidelines and in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Ridgeway Settlement and Title IX. Each principal is responsible for monitoring expenditures to ensure the spirit and intent of Ridgeway has been adhered to.
- Expenditures are authorized using district requisitions or vouchers and paid directly by the Business Office from Booster Club funds.

Booster Clubs are prohibited from having outside accounts for any purpose. Booster Club funds are deposited in the Booster Club's ECA account.

Booster clubs are permitted to raise funds for purchasing team merchandise, provided the school retains possession of the merchandise. Before raising funds, approval from the Activities Coordinator and/or school principal is required. The final purchase can only be authorized by the head coach, Activities Coordinator, or another school administrator.

Booster Clubs are permitted to raise funds for coaches to purchase clothing or attend clinics.

Donations and Gifts

- Gifts and/or donations may be made to the school in accordance with Board Policy, which states that all gifts given to the Billings Public Schools become property of the district. If applicable, add gifts to the inventory of equipment.

- The Superintendent is authorized to accept gifts and donations to the district and to individual schools on behalf of the Board of Trustees. If the Superintendent doubts the appropriateness of the gift or donation, it may be declined or referred to the Board for consideration.
- No employee may accept cash from an outside group or organization unless the funds are deposited into an ECA account before distribution. Any other gifts must be accepted by the Board.
- Gifts to any SD2 Activities program must follow all Board and MHSA policies and procedures as well as all Title IX mandates.
- Gifts or donations from school ECA funds must be made in accordance with Board Policy and approved by the principal.
- Scholarships can be set up as long as written criteria is established, documented, and approved by the principal or Superintendent.

Student Fees

HIGH SCHOOL

- **Participation Fee*** – $65.00 per activity per year
- **Activity Ticket**** – $30.00 per year (plus $3.50 service fee) – must be purchased through GoFan
- **Maintenance Fee** – $1.00 per admission ticket to all Daylis Stadium events. $5.00 per family and individual passes sold.
- **Instrument rental** - $150 per school year; $75 per summer; percussionists pay an additional fee for use of equipment.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Participation Fee*** – $55.00 per activity per year
- **T-Shirts** – $16.00
- **Shorts** – $7.00 (optional)
- **Football Jerseys** – $40.00
- **Instrument rental** - $150 per school year; $75 per summer; percussionists pay an additional fee for use of equipment.

*The participation fee is nonrefundable once practice has started.

** Note regarding online Activity Tickets – Students who do not have a smartphone purchase the ticket from their school Activities Office. Add the student's name to the "No Smartphone list" containing students without smartphones. Instruct the student that at games or other events, they need to check in with the ticket taker who finds the student on the list and allows them admission.

Ticket Prices

All regular season ticket prices are set in accordance with Board Policy.

SINGLE GAME OR EVENT

Daylis Stadium

- Adult $8.00
- Student: $6.00
- Pre-School: Free

Other Venues

- Adult $7.00
- Student: $5.00
- Pre-School: Free

SEASON PASS

- Individual Pass: All-Season/All-School $75.00
- Family Pass: All-Season/All-School $150.00

Note: There is a $5.00 charge to replace any lost or stolen pass.

COMPLIMENTARY PASSES

- **BPS Employees** – All District employees may use their employee ID to gain admittance for themselves and one other person to regular season games. The employee's ID is not valid at MHSA sponsored tournaments or other post-season contests.
- **BPS Appreciation Pass** – Issued to persons who make significant contributions to the district by the Director of Athletics & Activities and are good for regular season games. This pass is not valid at MHSA sponsored tournaments or other post-season contests.
- **Golden Age Pass** – Issued to residents of Yellowstone County who are 62 or older or retired BPS employees who receive benefits from TRS or PERS, regardless of age. These passes are good for regular season games. This pass is not valid at MHSA sponsored tournaments or other post-season contests.
- **MCA Pass** – Issued by the Montana Coaches Association and admits one user to regular season games. This pass is not valid at MHSA sponsored tournaments or other post-season contests.
- **Conference Pass** – Issued by the AA, A, B, and C conferences and admits one user to regular season events. This pass is not valid at MHSA sponsored tournaments or other post-season contests.
- **Press/Media Pass** – Issued to members of the media.

Athletic Trainers

In contract with the Billings Clinic and Ortho Montana, athletic trainers are provided for each of the high schools and, upon request, also serve the middle schools.

The following guidelines determine the way in which the athletic trainers support their assigned schools:

- Athletic trainers are assigned to work specifically with SD2 student-participants. While they are first responders and always act as such, they are not responsible for the training or oversight of non-participating students.
- The first priority of athletic trainers is in-season student-participants. Attention is given to out-of-season student-participants only when there are no immediate needs for those who are in-season.
- Athletic trainers are not responsible for, nor do they attend to, any injuries that occur outside of SD2 activities. Athletic trainers direct student-participants injured outside of an SD2 sponsored activity to seek treatment from their own physician.
- Athletic trainers are allowed to attend the state tournament with their school. The district Activities Office reserves rooms for the trainers based on the tournament schedule.

Emergency Treatment

Schools are responsible for providing first aid or emergency treatment for a student in case of sudden illness or injury; however, further medical attention is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Medical treatment is given according to Policy 3431 Emergency Treatment.

Summer Programs and Camps

Summer camps and programs approved by the principal and Activities Coordinator may be scheduled under the following conditions:

- The summer program is designed for the enhancement of school activity programs and the strength and conditioning of current student-participants.
- The program has adequate supervision by approved staff members.
- The program is financially self-sufficient. Student-participants are charged a fee determined by each individual school and the program chosen. The fees are used to pay the supervisors.
- The Activities Coordinator ensures fees are collected from all student-participants. If the fees collected do not cover the cost of the supervisor pay, the difference comes from the building ECA account.
- Student-participants and supervisors are responsible for the security and care of the facility.

Sports Camps

Coaches and sponsors may conduct camps upon approval of the building principal and/or Activities Coordinator. By MHSA rules, the school district is prohibited from sponsoring or financing a specialized camp in any way. MHSA Award and Amateur Rules apply and must be followed.

Because specialized camps are independent from SD2, both a Facility Use Contract and proof of facility liability insurance are required.

Any camp or clinic conducted during the school year in which student-participants are charged must adhere to the district requirement concerning rental fees and facility liability insurance. Otherwise, the activity is regarded as an extension of the activity program, and fees generated are deposited in the building ECA fund.

Checklist for High School Sports Camps

Any event on district property that is not part of regular district scheduling and charges an additional participation fee must be contracted according to the following SD2 policies: 4330 Community Use of School Facilities; 4330-P1 Equal Access; and 4330-P2 Use of School Facilities. Facility Use Rates for approved camps are $40 per day and $20 per ½ day.

1. Determine camp dates through collaboration with the building principal and Activities Coordinator. Sports camps can be scheduled between 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Monday through Friday, from June 1st through July 31st. However, open gym sessions already scheduled take priority over camp times.
2. Once the camp dates are approved by the building administrator, contact Kelly Sharp (281-5100) in the district Activities Office to complete a Facility Use contract.
3. Provide a copy of liability insurance listing Billings Public Schools as additionally insured for $1,000,000.
4. Individual groups are required to clean up the facilities after use. If necessary, custodians are hired to clean the facility and associated fees are charged to the group/camp at the custodian's hourly overtime rate.

Concessions and Vendors

Concessions and Vendors must adhere to the following guidelines:

- The sponsor of the club or group managing concessions work together with the school Activities Secretary to prepare the change fund and cash box.
- The concession stand operator contacts vendors, organizes the food to be sold, and coordinates students to help in preparation, sale, and cleanup.
- Items for sale have prices posted or are marked with a price.
- Food counts are reconciled to cash receipts for concession sales.
- Inventory is counted upon receipt and placed in a secure location.
- Any club, organization, or class may request to operate the concession stand.
- The Activities Coordinator makes equitable assignments.
- Priority may be given to classes or clubs who are preparing for major school activities.
- The final receipts and change box are stored in the school safe until it is returned to the school Activities Secretary the next school day.
- Malfunctioning equipment is reported to the Activities Coordinator.

Daylis Stadium Concessions

- The district Activities Office Stadium Manager is responsible for opening, stocking, and managing the accounts of the concession stand.
- Pre- and post-inventories are completed along with the district Activities Office Stadium Manager.
- The district Activities Office Stadium Manager takes inventory, charges for inventory used, and the remaining money earned is deposited into the club's account.
- Report any malfunctioning equipment to the Stadium Manager and/or district Activities Office.
- The concession stand is left clean and ready for next use.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets.
- Turn off all concession equipment.
- Turn out the lights and lock all windows and doors prior to leaving.

Outside Vendors

- Outside vendors are invited by a school organization and complete a Vendor Application.
- Outside vendors must have a certificate of liability on record in the Business Office at the Lincoln Center.
- Outside vendors must complete the Fundraising Approval Form annually, which is kept on file at the school. The form requires the principal's signature.
- Outside vendors must complete the Fundraising Report Form and attach a check made out to the school organization for their share of the funds which is deposited in the appropriate ECA account by the school Activities Secretary.
- The school and vendor can decide upon the payment terms, e.g., the night of, the next day, etc.

Vending Machines

- Items dispensed from vending machines must follow district, state, and federal mandates for nutritional value.
- The club in charge of the vending machine is responsible for making sure the machine is serviced and stocked in a timely manner and invoices are paid timely.
- Receipts from the vending machine are deposited in the appropriate ECA fund.

Creating a School Club

To organize a school club or activity, follow these steps:

- Obtain at least one faculty sponsor and draft a statement outlining the club's type and purpose and obtain preliminary approval from the principal.
- Draft a constitution and by-laws, stating the club's purpose, membership activities, and operating procedures.
- Submit the constitution and by-laws to the Student Council for a charter.
- After obtaining the charter, the principal assesses and approves the organization based on its potential for making worthwhile contributions to the educational and social development of students as well as the following conditions:
  - Clubs have published membership qualifications.
  - Membership in any club is not be denied on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age or handicap.
  - Students interested in membership are automatically admitted on a first-come, first-served basis, subject only to numerical limitations.
  - Membership dues are reasonable making clubs available to anyone interested.
  - Regular meetings are held on the school campus. Evening meetings are discouraged except for planned social events.
  - Clubs comply with all other rules and regulations established by SD2.
- Following approval by the principal, a written request is made to the Clerk of the District to create a new ECA account.
- Prepare an announcement stating the formation of the organization or club, the club's purpose, and the time, date, and place of the first meeting.
- Hold elections of officers, including a president, treasurer, and secretary.
- At the first club meeting, the sponsor provides the BPS Student Activities Participation Handbook to student-participants. The student-participants need to complete the Activity/Organization Information Form; Family & Medical Information Form; Final Acknowledgement Form; Media Information Form; and Indemnity Agreement. The sponsor retains the completed forms for the school year the activity takes place.

Change Log

Date	Description of change
8/9/2024	V1 publish date.
8/19/2024	Added clarification to volunteer coaching re: application and background check.
9/16/2024	Updated names & links in SD2 Policies & Procedures section; added info about Activity Tickets & students w/o smartphones to Student Fees section; added forms required to Creating a School Club section; add info to MS XC and SB.
9/18/2024	Added clarification to required training, including chart of requirements by role
10/29/2024	Deleted reference to Policy 3225 which was replaced with Policy 3230.
11/20/2024	Added section on McKinney-Vento Act.
2/7/2025	Updated Courses Required by Role chart & OPI units for Fundamentals & First Aid
3/24/2025	Added section for “C” team MS volleyball.
Apr-Jul 2025	Annual revision/update.