Montgomery County Schools



Athletic Handbook

2026-2027

Montgomery County Schools Athletic Handbook

In line with the mission and vision of the Montgomery County Schools, our athletic programs will seek to support learning and teaching for every student in a safe, nurturing environment. We will support engaging students in rigorous educational experiences in and out of the classroom and create positive sports experiences for all participants, stressing moral and ethical development as well as physical and intellectual growth. Sportsmanship and high standards will drive our athletic programs, and students and staff will be accountable for their actions as they represent our schools as coaches and student-athletes. Integrity, discipline, character, teamwork, and the value of hard work will drive our athletic programs, and these traits will be how we measure our success in athletics.

Code of Conduct for Coaches

- ❖ Outside coaches not employed full-time or part-time by Montgomery County Schools must be at least 21 years of age and shall complete all required paperwork included in the coach's packet provided by the athletic director.
- ❖ All coaches shall complete the Ethics Training, sign the form provided, and submit this form to the Human Resources Department at the Board of Education.
- ❖ All coaches must read the policy relevant to Student/Staff Relations and sign the form attached. This signed form must be submitted to the Human Resources Department.
- ❖ Coaches are required to review the NCHSAA PowerPoint presentation on eligibility rules before the season in which they coach. All coaches are expected to follow NCHSAA eligibility rules in all circumstances. The athletic director, and ultimately the principal of the school, is responsible for seeing that coaches know and follow all guidelines and policies.
- ❖ Coaches shall set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct with all student-athletes, parents, officials, school personnel, other coaches, the media, and the public.
- ❖ Coaches shall display the highest degree of sportsmanship and shall expect the same from student-athletes. Coaches shall discipline athletes who display unacceptable behavior, and

shall, at all times, discourage behaviors that may result in ejections from any contest.

- ❖ Coaches are responsible for being knowledgeable about game rules and shall be responsible for the interpretation of rules to those involved in the sport. At no time shall a coach try to circumvent the rules of the sport.
- ❖ All coaches shall promote and work in harmony with the total interscholastic program of the school.
- ❖ Coaches shall respect and support contest officials by avoiding conduct that will incite players or spectators against the officials.
- ❖ Any spectator who accesses the playing surface during an athletic event will be banned from attending games for the remainder of the season
- ❖ Coaches shall take an active role in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse while stressing the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- ❖ Coaches shall supervise athletes at all times. Supervision shall include before and after practice sessions and before and after games. At no time should athletes be left alone.
- ❖ Coaches shall follow all guidelines in maintaining clear, accurate, and up-to-date medical records that help keep students safe in their athletic participation and are bound by privacy laws in protecting such information.
- ❖ Coaches shall routinely check physicals throughout the season to ensure that no physicals are outdated. No athlete can be allowed to participate in sports unless a current physical is on file for them.
- ❖ Coaches shall prohibit, at all times, any behavior that resembles hazing.
- ❖ Coaches shall meet with parents of student-athletes before the beginning of every sports season. Student-athletes and their parents are required to sign contracts stating that the guidelines and requirements for participation in that sport are recognized and will be followed.
- ❖ Each coach has his/her policy on how he/she will select their team. In some sports, cutting a team down to a manageable size is a necessity. Coaches will explain their policy to prospective team members at the first meeting. A

student-athlete may be cut from the team anytime during the season for the appropriate reasons.

- ❖ At the High School level, any paid coach must show verification of CPR & AED courses
- ❖ Coaches shall allow a minimum of two (2) days for tryouts for all sports.
- ❖ Coaches are not allowed to accept or receive any personal gifts from community members. Any team contributions or donations should be handled by your athletic director or administration.
- ❖ Coaches and student-athletes are required to follow all guidelines for athletic participation as set forth by the State Board of Education, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, the Montgomery County Schools, and the school where the student participates in athletics.
- ❖ Coaches are responsible for following Board policies 4120, 4130, and 4150 in terms of student domicile, student assignment, and participation in sports.
- ❖ High school coaches are required to complete the Fundamentals of Coaching Class, Concussion Course, and CPR Training. A copy of your certificate of completion of each course should be sent to the Human Resources Department.

Guidelines for Operation of School-Based Athletic Programs

- ❖ Athletic Directors shall facilitate the presentation of the NCHSAA Eligibility PowerPoint for all coaches, including non-employee coaches.
- ❖ Athletic Directors shall facilitate parent meetings for all sports.
- ❖ Athletic Directors shall facilitate the process of getting physical forms to school nurses for review at the beginning of each sports season. Nurses shall submit a list of health concerns to the Athletic Director and Principal, making sure that they are aware of student athletes who have health issues.
- ❖ Athletic Directors and Principals shall be responsible for making sure that all coaches, assistant coaches, and trainers are aware of all health concerns, and that everyone involved with that

student-athlete understands how to deal with the health concern.

- At the beginning of each school year, every school shall submit a Crisis Plan to the Deputy Superintendent that meets the requirements of the NCHSAA. Plans should be updated every year.
- All coaches, including non-employee and volunteer coaches, must go through the proper procedures for being hired as coaches in the Montgomery County Schools. That includes, but is not limited to, a **completed application, health certificate, and background check**. **In addition, it is mandatory that all high school coaches complete the Fundamentals of Coaching Class and the Concussion Training Course.** Athletic Directors should provide this information to coaches. These should be completed before their coaching duties begin.
  A school shall follow Board policy 5015 in working with all volunteer coaches.
- Athletic Directors must ensure that background checks have been processed on every volunteer or paid coach before they are allowed to participate in practice sessions or games. Before they are allowed to work with students in any form, we must have a background check on file. Volunteer Tracker is a new resource for providing coaches with the required forms for the background check process if they are volunteer coaches. They will still need to complete the coaching packet provided to the Athletic Director.
- A certified First Responder should be on site for all home football contests.
- High schools are responsible for inspecting football helmets yearly. Middle schools shall inspect football helmets every two years (beginning in 2007).
- It shall be the responsibility of the Athletic Director and Principal to adhere to all MCS policies that pertain to academics, attendance, domicile, school assignment, and participation in sports.
- Each school is responsible for implementing a concussion plan. This plan should be followed in the event of a possible head injury. A copy of this plan should be on file and reviewed with

each coach and trainer. Each school is responsible for having students and parents sign the concussion form, indicating they have reviewed the plan. These signed forms should be kept on file at the school. (Concussion plan attached)

- ❖ All co-ed sports have both male and female coaches/chaperones or supervisors with athletes for practice and contests at all times.
- ❖ Random drug testing of athletes will be conducted by an outside screening company. These results will be kept confidential in the Human Resources Department.

Guidelines for Coaches' Pay and Verification of Experience

- ❖ Schools will hire coaches according to the MCS-approved coaches' pay scale, which names the allotted coaching positions. Schools will not be allotted extra money for coaching positions that are not filled.
- ❖ Should a coach be hired to coach two sports (such as girls' and boys' basketball), the coach will be paid two salaries because these are two separate sports with two different practice and game schedules.
- ❖ Every coach shall fill out a verification of experience form that documents coaching experience in all sports. Verification forms must be signed and verified by the coach, the Athletic Director, and the Principal. **Verification forms must be turned in to the Human Resources Office at the Board of Education before being paid for coaching duties.**
- ❖ Coaches will be paid according to the MCS coaches' pay scale and shall be paid based on experience in the particular sport they are coaching.
- ❖ At the end of each sports season, a form for the request of payment must be turned in to the county Athletic Director for approval. The form must be signed by the school Athletic Director and the Principal. The Principal and Athletic Director will verify years of experience in the sport coached, verify the amount to be paid, and sign the form which will be submitted to Finance for payment.

Code of Conduct for Student-Athletes

In addition to the rules of this Code of Conduct, and according to Policy 3620 and 4300, a participating student must, at all times, conform to guidelines set forth by the school and school system. Students must also follow all rules set forth by his/her coach and shall not receive any special privileges with regard to meeting his/her obligations to teachers or any other school personnel.

- Any player who leaves the bench to engage in an altercation may be subject to suspension from athletic participation and/or removal from a sports team.
- Student-athletes shall be expected to hold themselves to higher standards of conduct and performance as they represent their schools.
- Student-athletes are responsible for knowing the rules of their sport and for following all state and local guidelines (i.e., NCHSAA regulations).
- Students shall have a current physical on file at the school at all times. Physicals are valid for one year from the date of the examination, **and no student shall participate in sports without an up-to-date physical.**
- Parents shall attend a group meeting with the coach of the sport in which the student is participating. Parents and student-athletes shall sign a contract agreeing to adhere to all guidelines.
- Student-athletes are expected to travel with their team to all away contests and to travel back to the school with the team. Should extenuating circumstances arise, parents may transport their child from an event. Athletes may ride home from games with their parents only. (They are not permitted to leave with brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, friends, etc). The parents should communicate directly with the coach about transportation.

- Student-athletes are expected to represent Montgomery County Schools with integrity, responsibility, and good judgment at all times. The use, possession, purchase, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco

products, vaping devices, illegal drugs, or unauthorized controlled substances is prohibited both on and off school property.

- Any student-athlete found to be involved with alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or other drugs may be subject to suspension from athletic participation and/or removal from a sports team in accordance with Montgomery County Schools Board of Education policies, the Student Code of Conduct, and team rules. Consequences will be determined based on the circumstances of each incident and may include additional disciplinary action.

-
- All student-athletes at the high school level are required to participate in the new Montgomery County Schools Random Drug Testing Policy. (See back of handbook for policy)
- If a student-athlete is placed in ISS on the school site or is sent to Montgomery Learning Academy on the day of a game for the entire day, they will be ineligible to participate in a game on that day. If a student-athlete is placed in ISS for an entire day, the principal and athletic director will be allowed to decide if the student is allowed to participate in practice sessions for that day. If a student-athlete is only in ISS for 1 or 2 cores or equal to less than ½ of the school day, it will be the decision of the individual coach and principal for participation in practice sessions or games for that day.
  *** It is the expectation of Montgomery County Schools that student-athletes who are assigned to ISS for any period of time should receive some type of disciplinary action by the coach (Example: running, after-school detention, extra practice time, reduced playing time). Student-athletes are expected to set standards for behaviors.
- Students who are involved in behavior that results in suspension (in or out of school) shall be held accountable for such behavior. Students suspended from school are ineligible to participate in practice or games during the period of suspension. The Board of Education policy prohibits these students from being on campus during the time of suspension. A student suspended for violating the Board of Education's

Drug and Alcohol Policy will be suspended from the team for the remainder of the season. Before any athletic suspension provided for under these rules shall take effect, the student shall be verbally advised by the head coach and Athletic Director of the alleged violation, and the student will have an opportunity to explain or justify the action. If, after such a conference, the head coach is satisfied that a suspension is warranted, the student and his/her parents will be notified.

- Any student-athlete charged with a crime in the community is required to report it to their coach by the next school day. A committee, including the Principal, County Office Representative, and Athletic Director, will review the charges to determine continued eligibility. If the student-athlete is further convicted of a crime in the community, the same committee will review the case again. If the charge warrants immediate placement at Montgomery Learning Academy, the student will be ineligible to participate in sports at their home school.
- No athlete may quit one sport and try out for another after the season has begun without the mutual consent of both coaches and the Athletic Director. Any athlete who quits a team without permission of the coach or who is officially dismissed from a team before the conclusion of the sports season (including playoffs) may not practice or participate with any other athletic team until that season is completed (including playoffs). An athlete is considered a member of a team if he/she is listed on the final team roster.
- Theft or malicious destruction of any school or individual's equipment or property will not be tolerated. These offenses, and any other serious violations of the code of student conduct that take place on school grounds, will be reviewed by a committee for the assignment of appropriate consequences (including restitution) for the offense, based upon the facts of the specific case. The committee shall consist of the Head Coach, the school Athletic Director, the Principal, and the Deputy Superintendent. Any appeals of such consequences will be directed to the Superintendent. The final appeal of the Superintendent's decision by the parent and/or athlete is directed to the Montgomery County Schools Board of Education.

- ❖ Completion of the sports season is required for the student to be eligible for any award, letter (team, individual, or academic). Exception: an injury that limits participation (with doctor's confirmation). No awards shall be given to any student suspended for the remainder of the season for Athletic Code violations. The coaches may determine other guidelines for awards.
- ❖ A student who has been injured and has had medical treatment cannot participate again until the date indicated by the student's doctor.
- ❖ All student-athletes are required to turn in uniforms and equipment that are issued to them unless otherwise approved and specified by the coach, Athletic Director, and/or Principal. An athlete may not participate in any other sport until all equipment and uniforms have been returned to the coach of that team.
- ❖ The rules and regulations in this code shall pertain to any violations, on and off school premises, during the season of participation, as students represent the school at all times.

Guidelines for Montgomery Learning Academy

Students currently enrolled in any program at Montgomery Learning Academy are not eligible to participate in any sports at middle or high school levels at their home schools.

Guidelines for Montgomery County Early College

Students attending Montgomery County Early College are eligible to participate in athletics at Montgomery Central High School.

Student/Parent Contract

We, the undersigned student and parent(s), have attended the meeting for participation in:

_____, on _____.
Sport Date

We have reviewed the Montgomery County Schools Athletic Code of Conduct, understand its requirements, and agree to follow the rules governing athletic participation. Any student-athlete who engages in fighting, physical aggression, or violent behavior during the school day, on school property, while traveling to or from school, or at any school-sponsored activity may be subject to suspension from athletic participation and/or removal from a sports team.

_____
Student Signature/Date

_____
Parent Signature/Date

Use of Activity Buses and Cleanliness

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that activity buses are clean when they return to the school. All trash should be removed and properly disposed of. Individuals should not leave messes for others to clean.

If any mechanical issues are noticed, coaches must report them to the Athletic Director or school administration. Coaches are not assigned to specific buses; bus assignments are determined based on the number of athletes traveling and the distance of the trip.

The school treasurer maintains the bus transportation schedule, and any questions regarding scheduling should be directed to that office. Activity bus keys are kept in the main office and must be returned immediately after use so they are available for others. Coaches should also work with the Athletic Director to ensure buses are properly reserved through the Travel Tracker system.

Reporting Accidents and School Insurance

Any injuries that occur during practices or games must be reported to the office immediately. An accident report form should be completed detailing the injury. Office staff will then prepare the school insurance form for the parent or guardian.

School insurance serves as secondary coverage if the parent or guardian has their own insurance. If additional insurance exists, the accident should be reported to both insurance providers.

Physical Requirements

All student-athletes must have a current physical examination on file to participate in athletics. Physicals are valid for 395 days. If a physical expires during the season, the athlete may not participate in practices or games until an updated physical is submitted.

Eligibility

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all athletes meet eligibility requirements before participating in any activities. This includes verifying **current physicals, academic grades, attendance, and any other factors that may affect eligibility.**

Eligibility sheets (pink sheets) must be submitted to the office one week before the first contest for principal approval. A copy of the eligibility sheets must also be sent to the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services before the first contest. All eligibility sheets must include the principal's signature.

Parent/Athlete Pledge

Parent and athlete pledge forms must be signed before the first contest and submitted to the Athletic Director. These forms should be completed during the required parent meeting held at the beginning of each sports season.

Purchase of Supplies and Equipment

A purchase order signed by the principal must be obtained before any supplies or equipment are purchased. No purchases are permitted without prior approval from the school administration. If items are purchased without authorization, the individual making the purchase will be responsible for the invoice.

Coaches should submit equipment requests in writing to the Athletic Director or the principal for consideration. While every effort will be made to ensure teams have the necessary equipment, not all requests can be guaranteed. The school will prioritize providing safe, appropriate, and up-to-date equipment

Teamwork

Coaches are encouraged to support one another and the various athletic programs within the school. They should also support student-athletes who wish to participate in multiple sports and collaborate with other coaches to make this possible. The athletic department relies on teamwork and cooperation to meet the needs of all programs and achieve shared goals.

High School Athletic Booster Clubs

Athletic Booster Clubs provide valuable support to school athletic programs. Members often attend games, volunteer, and assist with various athletic needs. Coaches are encouraged to attend Booster Club meetings and share ideas. However, all equipment and supply requests must first be submitted to the Athletic Director. After reviewing the budget, requests may then be presented to the boosters for consideration. Working collaboratively with booster members helps ensure that the needs of all teams are addressed fairly.

Supervision of Athletes

Coaches must ensure that student-athletes are always properly supervised. Athletes should never be left unattended. A member of the coaching staff should remain with athletes before and after practices or games, and while they are waiting for transportation home.

Reporting Seasonal Records / Conference / State

At the end of each season, coaches must submit their team's seasonal records to the Athletic Director. This report should include the overall record, conference players, conference titles or placement, and any state playoff participation. These records are maintained for historical and reference purposes.

Inventory

Coaches must submit an inventory of all equipment and uniforms to the Athletic Director at the end of each season.

Solicitation of Funds from the Community

Coaches may not solicit or accept funds from community members without prior approval from the Principal and the Athletic Director.

Transporting Student-Athletes

Coaches should never transport a student of the opposite sex in their personal vehicle, even with parent or guardian permission, due to liability concerns. Coaches should ensure athletes have transportation and are not left unattended, but should not volunteer to drive them home.

Student-athletes are not permitted to drive themselves to or from games. Athletes may only leave games with their parents or guardians, not with siblings, relatives, or friends.

Social Media Communication with Students

Coaches must exercise professional judgment when using social media or electronic communication. Communication with currently enrolled students must be school-related and within the scope of the coach's responsibilities. Coaches are prohibited from communicating with students through personal social media accounts without parental permission. Posts on personal social media directed at a specific student will be considered direct communication and a violation of policy unless parental consent has been granted.

Sports Injuries and Coach Liability

Coaches must understand and practice proper supervision at all times. Key responsibilities include:

- Never leave the activity site unattended.
- Remaining in a position to actively supervise athletes.

- Anticipating and preventing potential problems. Coaches are expected to identify risks and take appropriate precautions, including concerns such as:
    - Defective or unsafe equipment
    - Lack of proper safety measures
    - Poorly fitted or damaged equipment or clothing
    - Activities that exceed the skill level or conditioning of participants
    - Inappropriate behavior that could escalate into problems
    - Activities that involve or could lead to hazing

Coaches must not allow horseplay, undisciplined behavior, or violations of rules, regulations, or safety procedures. When introducing new skills or activities, athletes should not perform individually until the entire group understands the skill and the proper safety procedures.

Coaches should design practices with a logical progression of activities appropriate for the age, maturity, and conditioning of the athletes. Coaches must also be knowledgeable in first aid and emergency procedures.

It is the coach's responsibility to clearly communicate the risks associated with each sport or activity and ensure that athletes understand those risks. Simply warning athletes is not enough; they must fully understand and appreciate the potential dangers.

To support athlete safety, coaches should:

- Explain the risks associated with the sport or activity.
- Help athletes understand and appreciate those risks.

- Teach precautions that reduce the likelihood of injury.

- Regularly reinforce lessons about risks, potential consequences, and safety practices.

Equipment and Facilities

Coaches are responsible for protecting athletes from hazards related to defective or unsafe equipment. This includes ensuring that equipment is properly fitted and used correctly, such as football protective gear and other training equipment. Coaches must also supervise the proper use of athletic equipment, training devices, and sports facilities.

Coaches are expected to routinely inspect the facilities where activities occur. If an unsafe condition is identified, it must be reported immediately to the Athletic Director or school administration. Until the issue is corrected, coaches must take appropriate steps to protect athletes, which may include moving or canceling the activity.

Areas that should be inspected for safety include gyms, courts, fields, bleachers, safety equipment, and locker rooms or shower facilities. Any concerns regarding safety should be reported promptly.

Due to concerns about MRSA and other health risks, coaches should also ensure that equipment and athletic areas are kept clean. Training equipment, weight machines, and athletic facilities should be disinfected whenever possible. Coaches should work closely with the school nurse, Athletic Director, and administration to address any health concerns affecting student-athletes.

Attendance Requirements for Practice and Game Participation

Student-athletes must attend at least 50% of the school day in order to participate in practices or games. For Saturday contests, athletes must attend 50% of the school day on Friday to remain eligible.

In cases of emergencies such as illness or family death, the Principal may approve an exception to the 50% attendance requirement.

Coaches Contract

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the policies, procedures, expectations, and guidelines established by Montgomery County Schools and my school's athletic program. I agree to abide by all applicable rules and regulations and to conduct myself in a manner that reflects positively on the school, student-athletes, and community.

I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure compliance with all district, conference, and state athletic requirements and to promote a safe, respectful, and educational environment for all student-athletes.

_____

Signature of Coach Date

_____

Signature of Athletic Director Date

(Coaches should sign this form and submit it to the Athletic Director at their school. Athletic Directors shall maintain these forms on file.)