

STUDENT INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

All students who achieve MCPS and MPSSAA eligibility standards have the opportunity to try out for teams in the interscholastic athletics program. Only those students who satisfy MCPS and MPSSAA eligibility criteria may participate in practices and contests. The following are the MCPS eligibility standards required for participation.

1. Academic Eligibility

The following items are interpretations of MCPS Policy IQD, *Extracurricular Activities*, and MCPS Regulation IQD-RA, *High School Students Who Participate in Athletic Activities*. Coaches and athletic departments will support students participating in interscholastic athletics to promote academic excellence and persistence towards their graduation requirements.

- a. A student must maintain a minimum 2.0 unweighted marking period grade average with no more than one failing grade in a marking period in order to participate in any athletic contests or to participate in or attend any practices during the next marking period. This regulation does not apply to students who are entering from a non-MCPS school or who are entering high school for the first time; these eligibility standards become effective as of their second year in any high school as initially determined by their marking period average in the fourth quarter of their first year of high school. Grades earned in High School Plus or Saturday School are not considered in determining a student's athletic eligibility.
- b. When a student transfers from an MCPS high school to a non-MCPS high school and subsequently transfers back to MCPS, the grades the student earned at the non-MCPS high school will be used to determine academic eligibility, provided the student has attended the non-MCPS high school for at least one complete marking period.
- c. A multi-hour course is counted as multiple courses when determining whether a student has maintained a 2.0 marking period grade average, but is counted as one course when determining the number of failed classes.
- d. A grade of D or above shall be considered passing and a grade of E or NC (no credit) shall be considered failing. Each E or NC is factored in when determining the marking period grade average. A grade of CR (credit) is not counted in determining the marking period grade average. An unsatisfactory evaluation in a noncredit assignment, such as student aide, shall not be considered failing for eligibility purposes. A grade of NG (no grade) is not to be included as either passing or failing in the calculation of the marking period grade average.
- e. When a student withdraws from a course after 25 days, the grade at the time of withdrawal will be used when determining eligibility for the next marking period. A student may not withdraw from more than one course after the 25-day drop/add period for eligibility purposes. This does not apply to withdrawal because of level of class, i.e., honors to regular class. When a student withdraws from school, the grades at the time of withdrawal are used in determining eligibility.
- f. A student passing all but one subject with at least a 2.0 marking period grade average may participate in interscholastic athletics during the next marking period, provided that conduct and attendance have been satisfactory. Students taking a minimum of one or two courses must pass each course and maintain a 2.0 unweighted marking period grade average to be eligible.
- g. On the day that the report card is issued, each coach is responsible for verifying that all student-athletes are eligible and enforcing these eligibility standards.
- h. A student's eligibility status begins on the day that a report card is issued and continues until the day that the next report card is issued.

- i. Grades reported as incomplete shall be considered passing grades for 10 school days after report cards are issued. Incomplete grades that are not changed to a passing grade within 10 school days will be considered failing for eligibility purposes.
- j. Students who do not maintain a 2.0 marking period grade average with no more than one failing grade during the final (fourth) marking period will not be eligible in the fall. Students have the opportunity to replace only one fourth marking period grade in which they received a “D” or failing grade by repeating the course in summer school. If none of the fourth marking period courses in which the student received a “D” or failing grade are offered in summer school, the student will be allowed to take another course in the same subject area. If a course in the same subject area is not available, then the student and his/her counselor may decide on an appropriate alternative course. The final summer session grade from the appropriate alternative course will replace the lowest course grade from the fourth marking period and will be applied to determine the student’s eligibility status. This alternative course will replace the grade for eligibility purposes only; credit earned will be applied according to the course taken.

2. Age

Refer to the *MPSSAA Handbook* Regulation .02, C.: “Students who are 19 years old or older as of August 31st are ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics.”

For the 2021–2022 school year, a student’s birth date must be after August 31, 2002.

3. Attendance

- a. Participation in any athletic event or practice requires student-athletes to attend all of their scheduled classes on the day of the event or practice. Student-athletes who have prescheduled activities, such as a medical appointment, court appearance, driver's exam, or religious observance, will be permitted to participate in events/practices on the day of the absence, provided approval for the absence has been granted in advance. The athletics specialist in each school will establish a procedure for obtaining this approval and for handling unforeseen emergencies. Prior approval is not necessary for approved school activities. Student-athletes who have an excused absence on Friday may participate in athletic events on Saturday.
- b. A student-athlete who is absent from any class without obtaining prior approval may not participate in practices or contests on the day he/she is absent.
- c. Student-athletes who do not obtain prior approval and do practice will not compete in the first contest after the violation is verified.
- d. A student-athlete may not compete in the first scheduled contest after an unexcused absence is verified.
- e. Repeated unexcused absences or chronic tardiness to any class will be sufficient reason for declaring a student ineligible at any time. The athletics specialist, in consultation with the coach, will determine the date and terms of ineligibility.

4. Medical Evaluation/Injuries, Illnesses, Surgery, Concussions

All students-athletes who desire to participate in interscholastic athletics are required to have an annual medical evaluation performed by a licensed physician, certified physician assistant under the supervision of a licensed physician, or certified nurse practitioner. MCPS Form SRS-8: *Pre-participation Physical Evaluation*, is to be used to submit evidence of this examination. This examination is valid for one calendar year except when the student has had a significant injury, illness, or major surgery. A student-athlete who has suffered a significant injury or significant illness, has had major surgery, or is suspected of having suffered a concussion is required to either submit a new medical evaluation or notification signed by a licensed health care provider (LHCP) verifying that it is safe for the student to participate.

5. Online Registration

- a. Before a student is allowed to tryout or practice, he or she must submit a current medical evaluation (MCPS Form SRS-8) including the MPSSAA COVID-19 Supplemental Questions and complete the online registration process through the online portal.
- b. Completion of the online registration process ensures that students and parents have submitted information contained in the Student-Parent Participation Contract/Parent Permission Form, emergency medical card, baseline testing consent form, and forms pertaining to concussions and cardiac arrest.
- c. Through the online registration process, all students and parents are required to review health and safety information provided on the MCPS Athletics web page, including materials on baseline testing, concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and COVID-19.
- d. Students and parents/guardians must also electronically submit MCPS Form 560-31: *Application to Participate in an Activity Away from School for Which MCPS Transportation Is Not Provided*, during the ParentVue online registration process.
- e. Students must submit other forms or contracts as required by the school.

6. Transfer Rule

A student who transfers or receives a Change of School Assignment (COSA) from his/her home attendance area school without a change of residence of the parents or legal guardian will be ineligible to participate in athletics for one calendar year from the date of enrollment at the new school. If unusual circumstances exist, a student may appeal the ineligibility in writing to the systemwide athletics compliance specialist, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 174, Rockville, Maryland 20850. A copy of an approved MCPS Form 335-45: *Change of School Assignment (COSA)*, must accompany the appeal.

Middle school students who legally attended school outside of their residence area and who wish to remain in that pattern will need to reapply for a transfer at the high school level. If a COSA or transfer is granted under this condition, athletic ineligibility is waived automatically.

7. Residency

Per MPSSAA regulation .02A, students must be officially registered and attending the school they are authorized to attend per MCPS regulations. They may represent only the school in which they are registered and at which it is anticipated they will complete their graduation requirements.

8. Residency Guidelines

The *Interscholastic Athletics Residency Guidelines* assist with confirming the residency status of:

- Student-athletes who transfer from one MCPS high school to another MCPS high school
- Student-athletes who transfer from a non-MCPS high school to an MCPS high school
- Student-athletes whose residency has been questioned

The guidelines are included in the *Athletics Specialists Reference Guide*.