

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. The following are the MCPS eligibility standards required for participation.

1. Academic Eligibility

The following items are interpretations of MCPS Policy IQD, *Academic Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities*, and MCPS Regulation IQD-RA, *Academic Eligibility for Students Who Participate in Extracurricular Activities*.

- a. A student must maintain a 2.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA) 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. 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 GPA 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 GPA. A grade of CR (credit) is not counted in determining the GPA. 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 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 GPA 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 GPA 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 GPA 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 2018–2019 school year, a student’s birth date must be after August 31, 1999.

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 athletic director 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 athletic director, 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. myMCPS 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) and complete the online registration process through the myMCPS Parent Portal.
- b. Completion of the myMCPS 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 myMCPS online registration process, all students and parents are required to review certain health and safety information provided on the MCPS Athletics web page, including materials on baseline testing, concussions, and sudden cardiac arrest.
- d. Students and parents/guardians 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 myMCPS 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 director of systemwide athletics, 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 *Athletic Directors Reference Guide*.

REGULATIONS

1. All-Star Games

All-star games are not organized or administered by MCPS. Only seniors may participate, and only after the end of the season. The *MPSSAA Handbook* states in Section .04, D., (5) that "Individual students may participate in two all-star games per sport, upon the completion of their eligibility in the sport in which this participation occurs."

2. Amateur Standing

Refer for the *MPSSAA Handbook* Regulation .10 (Amateur Rules).

3. Ejections from Contests

Student-athletes who are ejected, suspended, or otherwise permanently removed from a contest for unsafe or unacceptable behavior, including red cards, two yellow cards, or their equivalent, are not eligible to participate in the next contest. Impacted student-athletes shall not be on the sidelines during the existing contest or during the next contest. Coaches shall notify the athletic director in writing of the ejection/suspension and date(s) of exclusion. This rule applies to regular season as well as postseason contests.

4. Drugs and Alcohol Regulation

Any MCPS student-athlete with verified use, distribution, or possession of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and/or controlled substances on school property or at a school-sanctioned event, is prohibited from participating in athletic activities for a minimum of 10 consecutive school days (including any intervening non-school days). The student-athlete will be eligible for athletic activities on the eleventh school day.

Individual schools may create a more stringent penalty than that stated above consistent with the philosophy of its administration and community.

5. Outside Participation

Refer to *MPSSAA Handbook* Regulation .02G(1) (Eligibility).

6. Participation on More Than One Team in a Season

Students shall not be permitted to participate in more than one interscholastic sport in one season. If a student leaves one team and has not participated in a contest, he/she may join a second team if the coaches of each team agree. The athletic director must be notified in writing.

7. Years/Seasons of Eligibility

Refer to *MPSSAA Handbook* Regulation .02D (Eligibility). MCPS students are expected to complete their graduation requirements in four years. MCPS students may not participate in athletics in their fifth year of high school unless extraordinary circumstances prevail that prevent the student from graduating in four years. The appeal is directed to the principal.

8. Suspensions

Suspended or excluded students are ineligible for extracurricular activities until they are reinstated in classes. This includes in-school suspensions. Students suspended on Friday may not participate until they are reinstated on the subsequent school day (Monday).