

STUDENT-PARENT/GUARDIAN ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Philosophy

Interscholastic athletics supplement and support the academic mission of the school system and assist students in their growth and development. Athletics assists in promoting the importance of teamwork, effort, goals, and commitment. Interscholastic athletics is highly competitive, but winning is not the primary measure of success. Sportsmanship, respect for participants, and dignity in the face of adversity are more important than the outcome of the contest. All athletes do not perform at the same level, but all can demonstrate effort, dedication, and sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship

An important mission of the interscholastic athletics program is to teach and reinforce values relating to sportsmanship, competition, and fair play. It is expected that team personnel, parents/guardians, and spectators respect this mission by exhibiting appropriate behavior at athletic events. Countywide team and school awards are presented annually to schools whose coaches, players, and fans, demonstrate a high degree of sportsmanship.

Student Eligibility Requirements

Students must meet the following requirements to be eligible to participate. Participation of ineligible students will result in individual and team sanctions, including forfeits for the team.

1. Students must submit a current *MCPS Pre-participation Physical Evaluation Form* (MCPS Form SR-8), a *Medical Card for Athlete* (MCPS Form 560-30), and a *Student/Parent/Guardian Athletics Participation Contract* before being allowed to participate in practices or contests.
2. Students must achieve a minimum 2.0 grade point average for the most recently completed marking period, with no more than one failing grade. Academic eligibility is determined on the date report cards are issued and remains until the next report card is issued.
3. Students must attend all of their scheduled classes in order to participate in a practice or contest on that day. If the principal or designee grants an excused absence in advance for a prescheduled activity or an unforeseen emergency, the student may participate on that day.
4. If during the season a student has an unexcused absence, the student may not compete in the next contest after the violation has been verified.
5. In addition to other infractions, a student may be suspended or removed from a team for unexcused absences or chronic tardiness to classes or team practices.
6. Students who are 19 years old or older as of August 31 of the current school year are ineligible.
7. Students may not participate in more than one interscholastic sport in one season.
8. A student may not participate in practices or contests when serving an in-school or out-of-school suspension. The student becomes eligible to participate on the next school day following the suspension.
9. Students must satisfy school and school system Participation Standards.
10. Students whose legal residence is outside the designated boundary of a particular school may not participate unless they have received a Change of School Assignment (COSA) and athletic waiver.
11. Students should refer to *A Student's Guide to Rights and Responsibilities* for additional guidelines and regulations related to eligibility.

Hazing

Hazing is prohibited at all times. Hazing involves any act that subjects teammates to mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. In some instances, hazing constitutes a criminal act. At a minimum, hazing may lead to immediate dismissal from a team.

Assumption of Risk

Participation in interscholastic athletic activities often includes intense competition and poses the potential for serious, catastrophic, or life-threatening injury. Participants and parents/guardians are urged to consider that there are inherent risks and hazards associated with athletic participation. Risks vary from sport-to-sport and can occur under direct supervision and with use of proper safety equipment.

Health and Safety

Parents/guardians and students are required to review health and safety related information provided on the MCPS Athletics website <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/athletics>. The website includes information on MRSA, heat acclimatization, hydration, sudden cardiac arrest, head injuries and concussions, steroids, and sudden cardiac arrest. If a student or parent/guardian cannot access the MCPS Athletics website, the school will provide the required information.

Communication with Coaches

Parents/guardians should not attempt to address coaches immediately after contests and practices. Coaches have many post contest/practice responsibilities, including supervision of players. Also, the post-contest/practice period is often emotionally charged and not conducive to productive discussion. If a parent/guardian feels a need to communicate a concern, the parent/guardian should contact the coach and/or athletic director to arrange a later meeting.

Electronic Communications

Parents/guardians and students are expected to utilize appropriate, positive use of social media, e-mail messages, blogs, websites, and other electronic communications. Parents/guardians and students shall not make inflammatory or derogatory comments and/or post inappropriate descriptions or pictures regarding students, staff members, coaches, and/or other teams or schools.

Participation Expectations and Standards

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a privilege. Accordingly, students must meet certain standards in order to earn the privilege of participation. At a minimum, the following standards are required of all student-athletes:

1. Exhibit public behavior that will reflect positively on the team, school, and community.
2. Exhibit responsible, respectful, and trustworthy behavior to teammates and coaches.
3. Exert efforts to maintain a high level of academic achievement.
4. Comply with all team, school, and school system rules, regulations, and policies.
5. Exhibit appropriate behavior at all team and school-related activities.
6. Attend all team functions unless ill or given prior permission to be absent by the coach.
7. Respect and comply with decisions made by the coach, athletic department, and contest officials.
8. Report to the coach any issues or developments that may affect eligibility status.
9. Comply with safety and health precautions distributed and emphasized by the school system.

Residency

Montgomery County Board of Education Policy JEE, *Student Transfers*, and MCPS Regulation JEE-RA, *Transfer of Students* require that students attend specific schools within the established attendance area in which they reside or are assigned in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). When a student participates in an interscholastic athletic program at a school to which the student is not assigned, or the home address provided is not the student's legal residence, the student is not eligible to participate unless the student has received a Change of School Assignment (COSA), based on accurate information, and has received an athletic waiver from the director of systemwide athletics. A COSA and an athletic waiver also are required when a student moves out of a school's boundary area and desires to continue to attend and participate at that school.

Illegal Substances/Alcohol/Tobacco/Steroids/Controlled Substances

MCPS athletic regulations state that any 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.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MCPS)
STUDENT-PARENT/GUARDIAN ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION CONTRACT
AND PARENT PERMISSION FORM**

Student: _____ Student ID: _____

School: _____ Team: _____ School Year: _____

Parent/Guardian and Student-Athlete: Review this contract carefully (front and back), complete information as requested, affix signatures, and return the completed contract/permission form to the school.

Stipulations

We have received and read the *Student-Parent Athletic Participation Information*. Based on this information, we understand and stipulate to the following. I/We:

1. Understand the eligibility regulations required for participation and affirm that all eligibility requirements have been satisfied, including age, residence, and academics.
2. Understand that participation of ineligible players will result in individual and team sanctions, including forfeits for the team.
3. Affirm that the student will exert effort to maintain a high level of academic achievement.
4. Understand that there is potential for serious, catastrophic, or life-threatening injury associated with participation in a sport.
5. Acknowledge receipt and review of safety and health information made available by the school system, including information regarding concussions, MRSA, hygiene, heat acclimatization, hydration, steroids, and sudden cardiac arrest.
6. Affirm that the student shall not participate in hazing at any time, of any nature.
7. Shall exhibit, as a participant or spectator, a high level of sportsmanship at contests.
8. Shall follow appropriate procedures in communicating concerns to coaches.
9. Affirm that the student will abide by all team and participation standards.
10. Shall utilize appropriate, positive use of technology, including social media and other electronic communications.
11. Affirm that the student shall not use steroids, illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco unless medically prescribed for a specific condition or illness.
12. Shall allow certified athletic trainers contracted by MCPS to administer emergency and first aid care to the student, as allowed by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), the Maryland Board of Physicians, and Board policies and MCPS regulations.

Residency Verification

In order to be eligible, students must be legally enrolled at a high school designated by the school system based on their legal primary address. Please respond to the following residency questions:

A. The student resides at	_____ MD _____	
Street Address	City	Zip Code
B. This residence is within the boundaries of _____	High School/Consortium	
C. The student resides at this residence with a parent/guardian:	_____ yes	_____ no
D. My current address is the same as last year:	_____ yes	_____ no
E. I have only played at my current high school:	_____ yes	_____ no
F. I agree to notify the coach / school of any changes in residence:	_____ yes	_____ no

Permission to Participate

I/We hereby authorize and consent to our child’s participation in interscholastic athletics and sports. We understand that the sport in which our child will be participating is potentially dangerous, and that physical injuries may occur to our child requiring emergency medical care and treatment. I/We assume the risk of injury to our child that may occur in an athletic activity.

In consideration of the acceptance of our child by MCPS in its athletic program, and the benefits derived by our child from participation, I/we agree to release and hold harmless the Montgomery County Board of Education, its members, the superintendent of schools, the principal, all coaches, and any and all other of their agents, servants, and/or employees, as well as entities that provide training to MCPS coaches and/or athletes as part of the school system’s athletic program, and agree to indemnify each of them from any claims, costs, suits, actions, judgment, and expenses arising from our child’s participation in interscholastic athletics.

I/We hereby give our consent and authorize the Montgomery County Board of Education and its agents, servants, and/or employees to consent on our behalf and on behalf of our child, to administer emergency medical care and treatment in the event we are unable to be notified by reasonable attempts of the need for such emergency medical care and treatment.

Each year, MCPS makes available a student accident insurance policy at a nominal premium. This insurance is secondary to the family's own insurance. Because accidents will inevitably occur despite our best efforts to maintain a high level of safety in all student activities, this insurance coverage is recommended unless the family deems that other insurance coverage (in force) will meet the needs of the student. The student accident insurance policy is available at the beginning and throughout the school year. The coverage may be obtained from the insurance carrier. Forms are available at the school.

I, _____, and I, _____
(parent's name) (student's name)

have carefully reviewed the *Student- Parent/Guardian Athletic Participation Information* and the *Student/Parent/Guardian Athletic Participation Contract and Parent/Guardian Permission Form*. I/We understand the conditions for participation in the MCPS interscholastic athletic program, and I/we understand that there are inherent risks associated with participation.

I/We agree as follows:

- My child has my/our permission to participate in _____
(name of sport)
at _____ High School.
- I/We understand and conform to all of the statements in the Stipulations portion of the Contract.
- I/We I have responded truthfully and accurately to the questions in the Residency portion of the Contract.

Please affix signatures below.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian Date _____ Date

Signature of Student Date

**In the event that both parents retain legal guardianship of the student, the signatures of both parents are required.*