

WEST MICHIGAN ACADEMY OF ARTS & ACADEMICS

STUDENT-ATHLETE HANDBOOK

2025-2026



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ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

West Michigan Academy of Arts & Academics believes that a dynamic program of student activities is vital to the educational development of the student while recognizing that athletic programs are secondary to academic programs. The goal of these programs is to realize the value of participation without over-emphasizing the importance of winning. The purpose is to develop and improve character traits among the program's participants. Our programs should expand the experiences available to middle school students while providing students with several options to participate in athletic programs, improving fundamental skills while gaining knowledge and appreciation for the game, develop good sportsmanship, and support and practice the WMAAA mission. WMAAA currently offers Girls Volleyball and Boys Basketball in the Fall, Girls Basketball in the Winter, and co-ed Cross Country in the Spring (for the 2025-2026 school year we are also looking into offering Soccer opportunities for both girls and boys).

THE PRIVILEGE

To represent West Michigan Academy of Arts & Academics (WMAAA) through interscholastic sport is considered an honor and a privilege, not a right. When a student participates on a team, that person must abide by certain standards. Athletes represent their community as well as their school and themselves. WMAAA athletes should set a good example for younger students as well as for their fellow students. Be proud of all WMAAA athletes because only those who maintain satisfactory scholastic standing and good conduct will be a part of your team.

SPORTSMANSHIP EXPECTATIONS

The Six Fundamentals of Good Sportsmanship:

1. Show respect for opponents. They are our guests or we are their guests.
2. Show respect for the officials. They are educators who do their job to the best of their ability.
3. Know, understand, and appreciate the rules of the contest. Conform to the spirit as well as to the letter of the rules.
4. Maintain self-control at all times. The desire to win must not overcome rational behavior.
5. Recognize and appreciate an opponent's good performance. Applauding a quality performance by an opponent is good sportsmanship and goodwill.
6. Encourage others to be good sports. If you see someone displaying unsportsmanlike behavior, spend a few moments to remind that person of the role of educational athletics and how sportsmanship is a part of the process.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Students participating on sports teams should meet the following eligibility requirements in addition to having a current sports physical (the physical exam must not be dated earlier than April 15 of the previous school year) and all forms turned into the WMAAA office. Each requirement applies to each subject area and will be assessed on a weekly basis. The assessments will start one week before the season and continue every week throughout the season. Failure to meet the requirements will result in the student being ineligible to participate in games. If at the next assessment the student fulfills all the requirements, his/her eligibility will be reinstated.

Academic Eligibility

- The student's grades should not include either two D's or one F. If either of these occurs, he/she will be ineligible. WMAAA may further restrict this criteria to stress the importance of academics.
- The student is expected to turn in all homework. Two or more missing homework assignments and the student will be ineligible.
- Any student who is participating in educational services in the resource room (special education) will have their academic performance and the resulting eligibility examined on a case-by-case basis. This assessment should be done with the resource room professional, the Director, and the homeroom teacher.
- The Academic Eligibility form should be completed by the classroom teachers and submitted to the coach each week.

Absences from School

- Athletes must attend **all** classes to participate in practice or contests unless they have been excused or pre-excused by the Principal.
- A student suspended out of school is forbidden from being present at any school-sponsored event scheduled for that day, either home or away. A suspension will be considered an unexcused absence from practice.

Absences from Practice

We expect our athletes to attend all required practices in their sport. However, realizing that there can be conflicts in time and scheduling over which the athlete may have little if any control an excused and unexcused approach will be used by all coaches.

- **Pre-excused:** An athlete knowing that a conflict exists and having an acceptable reason for missing a practice will not be penalized. Acceptability of the reason is at the discretion of the coach. An athlete who missed a practice or practices with a pre-excuse, while not being subject to any punitive action, may not be able to perform in a game due to lack of preparation.
- **Excused:** Absences due to illness, death in the family, and other emergency situations brought to the attention of the coach.
- **Unexcused:** Any athlete who misses a practice without a pre-excused or excused absence will face the following disciplinary action:
 - First offense - one game suspension.
 - Second offense - two game suspension.
 - Third offense - suspension for rest of season.

Any suspension resulting from an unexcused absence will take place on the first playing date following the unexcused absence. Playing dates which involve multiple competitions, such as tournaments, double headers, or double duals shall be counted as two dates in computing the number of contest suspensions.

Coaches may have attendance rules as part of a particular program. Those rules may be approved by Administration and substituted for the above attendance rules.

Conduct Eligibility

- Students should maintain an attitude that is acceptable to all staff members. Steps to be taken are as follows:
 - The teacher will address the behavior.

- The teacher will contact the parents(s) and explain that the student will be placed on warning if the behavior does not improve.
- If the behavior does not improve, an Administrator will be notified and the student will be placed on warning.
- An Administrator will notify the coach, the athlete, and parent(s).
- A second warning means missing one week of competition.
- A third warning is dismissal from the team.
- Coaches have the prerogative to remove students from competition for unsportsmanlike conduct and /or unexcused absences from games/practices.
- If a student is ineligible, or not competing for any reason, he/she may **not** dress for the game. The student is required to practice and attend the game as a spectator.
- Students will not be eligible when on suspension.
- The student should not have any violations of the school's Student Code of Conduct as determined by an Administrator.

Age/Grade Eligibility

- If a student turns 15 years old **before** Sept.1st, they are ineligible to compete.
- WMAAA Sports are open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students only. No Elementary grades may participate.

NO CUT POLICY

The general philosophy for WMAAA athletics is to encourage all interested students to participate. Thus, we encourage a no-cut policy.

Obviously, time, space, facilities, equipment, personal preference, and other factors will place limitations on the most effective squad size for any particular sport. However, when developing policy in this regard, WMAAA strives to maximize the opportunities for students without diluting the quality of the programs.

Cutting Responsibilities

Choosing the members of the athletic squads is the sole responsibility of the coaches of those squads. Lower level coaches shall take into consideration the policies established by the head coach in that particular program when selecting final team rosters.

Prior to tryouts, the coach shall provide the following information to all candidates for the team:

- Extent of try-out period;
- Criteria to be used to select the team;
- Number to be selected;
- Practice commitment if they make the team;
- Game commitment if they make the team.

Cutting Procedure

When a squad cut becomes a necessity, the process will include three important elements. Each candidate will:

- Have competed in a minimum of a one-week practice session;
- Have performed in at least one intra-squad scrimmage;
- Be personally informed of the cut by the coach and the reason for the action.

Cut lists are not posted. The coach will talk one-on-one with each student that tried out. Coaches will discuss alternative possibilities for participation in the sport or other areas in the activities program.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Student Guidelines

- Players may not have an obligation to a particular sport more than a total of five (5) days per week which includes two (2) games per week.
- Within WMAAA athletics every student athlete will be given the opportunity to play and every student athlete will be given the opportunity to sit during each contest. Athletes that are not playing should not be dressed.
- Athletes will be removed from the game for using profanity.
- Athletes may not wear jewelry during athletic contests.
- Uniforms must be worn as the manufacturer intended. The waistband of the shorts must be around the waist of the athlete. Jerseys must be tucked in at the start of the contest.
- All players will congratulate the other team after each game.

Transfer Students

- Transfer students must practice a minimum of five days before they may play in their first athletic contest. Scrimmages are considered practices.
- Transfer students must consult with the athletic department to review eligibility and conditions of transfer.

Cancellation Procedures

- The school hosting the game is responsible to cancel the game for any reason (no electricity, severe weather, etc.)
- Severe weather policy (tornado watch/warning or snow day):
 - Tornado watch or warning – all contests are canceled.
 - Thunderstorm/snowstorm watch or warning – AD will determine cancellation.
 - Athletic Director/School Administration will contact the school the team(s) are competing against by 1:00 pm on the day of the contest if the contest is canceled.
- Canceled games will be rescheduled as soon as possible after the cancellation date.
- If school is canceled, all athletic contests and practices are canceled.

Tournaments

- WMAAA currently operates as an independent and has no league affiliation.
- At this time, WMAAA is not eligible to compete in a league or state tournament.
- Tournaments may be added to the athletic schedules as opportunities arise.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any student whose conduct is determined to be a discredit to him/herself, the team, or the school during their middle school career shall be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the coach, Athletic Director, and/or a school Administrator. Being a participant in WMAAA's athletic program is a privilege and not a right. Any participant who does not treat it as such will lose his/her privilege to engage in it.

All members of athletic teams are bound by the following training rules (as they apply to substance use or possession) at all times throughout the entire current school year plus any school sponsored event.

Suspension

Temporary suspension of participants may be made by the coach of the sport and the a school Administrator/Athletic Director. Suspension from a team results in nonparticipation in play/practice during the entire period of the suspension.

Athletic training rules forbid the use, possession, or distribution of tobacco (in any form), alcohol, drugs, narcotics, or any controlled substance or any item represented to be a controlled substance by any athlete who represents WMAAA.

- The first offense will result in a suspension for the remainder of the current athletic season.
- Second offense will result in a suspension from all athletics for twelve months.

Removal from Participation

A student athlete may be removed from his/her team for the following reason:

- Violations of the school's Student Code of Conduct
- Violations of school, athletic, or team policies
- Personal misconduct that involves police or court action during the sport season either before, during, or after hours
- Verbal or physical attack upon any individual
- Acts of poor sportsmanship
- Continuous weekly academic ineligibility as determined by the Athletic Eligibility Form
- Refusing to participate in athletic practices or contests

Student athletes will be given the opportunity for a hearing with the appropriate school administrator if the student or his/her parent/guardian indicated the desire for one. A hearing shall be held to allow the student and his/her parent/guardian to contest the facts or to contest the appropriateness of the sanction imposed by a disciplinary authority. The suspension will be in effect until the appeal process has been resolved.

Steps for Review

- The student athlete should have met with the coach involved to try to solve the problem.
- The student athlete may request a review by a school Administrator who will arrange a meeting with the coach, the student athlete, and the parents. This meeting shall take place within five school days of the request for the review.
- If the decision resulting from the meeting with the coach, parents, and a school Administrator is unsatisfactory to the parents, they may appeal to the Board of Directors.

FORMS

All of the following forms need to be turned in to the listed locations before a student will be allowed to participate in any practices, scrimmages, or games. All forms can be turned into the WMAAA Office.

Forms to be on file in the WMAAA Office

- [Physical Form](#) (must not be dated earlier than April 15 of the previous school year)
- [Concussion Form](#)
- Athletic Permission Form
- Sports Waiver Form
- Transportation Form

Forms to be on hand with your Coach

- Emergency Information Form

[WMAAA Forms Packet](#)