



MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT ATHLETE ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK
2026-2027

Athletic Handbook 2026-2027 Contents

Part 1 - Overview	5
MHS Athletic Program	5
Profile	5
Virginia High School League Regions, Conferences and Districts	5
Philosophy and Goals	6
Conflict Resolution	7
Parent Meetings	7
Athletic Boosters Association	7
Related Publications	7
Part 2 – Basic Requirements	8
Eligibility	8
Forms	10
Insurance	10
Tryouts and Drops	11
Part 3 – Rules and Regulations	13
Athletic Code and Training Rules	13
Academic Requirements	13
Attendance at School	13
Practices and Contests	14
Dual Sport Participation	14
Equipment and Uniforms	15
Locker Room	16
Substance Abuse	17
Travel	18
VHSL Fines	19
VHSL Sportsmanship Code	19
Part 4 – Enforcement of Rules	20
Code, Handbook and Training Rules Violations	20
Penalties for School Disciplinary Action	21
Game Disqualifications	21
Hazing	21
Theft and Vandalism	21
Part 5 – Health and Safety	22
Athletic Training Program	22
Blood Drives	22
Conditioning	22
Injuries	22
Nutrition	22
Public Health	22
Part 6 – Recognitions and Awards	23
Criteria for Varsity Letters	23
Certificates	23
Scholarships	23
Recognition Nights	24
Appendices	25
Appendix A: MHS Athletic Standards of Conduct Code	25
Appendix B: MHS Athletic Handbook Acknowledgement Form	26
Appendix C: MHS Medical/Physical Update Form	27
Appendix D: VHSL Code for Interscholastic Athletics	28
Appendix E: MHS Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes	29

MHS ATHLETIC PROGRAM: OVERVIEW

Profile:

Meridian High School (MHS) offers athletic opportunities for students in grades 8 through 12 on varsity, junior varsity and club-level teams.

MHS currently sponsors the following activities for the fall, winter and spring seasons:

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cheerleading	Basketball (Boys and Girls)	Baseball (Boys)
Cross Country (Boys and Girls)	Cheerleading	Lacrosse (Boys and Girls)
Field Hockey (Girls)	Swim (Boys and Girls)	Soccer (Boys and Girls)
Football	Wrestling (Boys & Girls)	Softball (Girls)
Golf (Boys and Girls)	Gymnastics (Girls)	Tennis (Boys and Girls)
Volleyball (Girls)	Indoor Track & Field	Outdoor Track & Field
Volleyball (Boys)		
Girls Flag Football (Club)		

Virginia High School League — Districts and Regions

MHS competes as a member of the Virginia High School League (VHSL), the state governing body for interscholastic athletics and activities. Membership in the VHSL allows MHS teams to compete for district, regional and state championships, when available. For interscholastic athletic competition, schools are grouped by enrollment. Currently, MHS competes as a Group 3 school. Group 3 is subdivided into four geographical regions, each consisting of 12-16 schools.

For all sports except lacrosse, boys volleyball, gymnastics and girls flag football, MHS is a member of the Northwestern District and Region 3B. The schools in this district and region are:

Northwestern District

Brentsville High School (3)	Manassas Park High School (3)	Meridian High School (3)
Skyline High School (3)	Warren County High School (3)	John Handley High School (4)
Fauquier High School (3)	Liberty (Beal) High School (3)	James Wood High School (4)
Millbrook High School (4)	Kettle Run High School (4)	Sherando High School (4)

Region 3B

Brentsville High School	Culpeper County High School	Goochland High School
James Monroe High School	Maggie Walker High School	Manassas Park High School
Meridian High School	Skyline High School	Warren County High School
William Monroe High School	Fauquier High School	Kettle Run High School

In Lacrosse, MHS competes with the following:

North District: Brentsville, Fauquier, Kettle Run, and Liberty.

Region B: Brentsville, Fauquier, Kettle Run, Liberty-Beaeton, Meridian, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Goochland, Monticello, Orange, Western Albemarle

State: Combined Class 1-4

Philosophy of Athletics

The athletic department at Meridian High School believes that an interscholastic athletic program should provide opportunities for students to develop their talents in a structured program under the guidance of competent coaches. By supporting more than just a varsity-level team in most sports, a large number of students can participate in athletics and develop skills they can use well into adulthood. We believe that athletics is not only about competition between individuals or teams representing different schools but also about the philosophy that discipline, good character and hard work result in eventual success. We hope that athletic participation at Meridian High School is a positive force in preparing our students for an enriching and vital role in society. Because of the high interest of community members in our athletic programs, sports provide an opportunity to demonstrate this philosophy to the public. Mindful of both the positive contribution of athletics and the potential for undesirable consequences, we hereby set forth the goals of our athletic program.

Meridian High School Athletic Department Goals

- To recognize and support the role of athletics as a vital part of the education process
- To support our school's belief in the development of the whole person student through athletic competition
- To supplement the academic program by providing for the development of physical skills and further development of personal character, self-discipline and commitment
- To provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of responsibility and learn leadership, organizational, and team participation skills
- To conduct a sports program in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the rules and regulations of our school, the Northwestern District, and the VHSL.

With these goals in mind, the student athlete, coaches, and administration will work together to abide by the regulations and goals of the sports program. Participation in the athletic program is a privilege that must be continuously earned by student-athletes and coaches. By adhering to these goals and standards of conduct, we will maintain the best possible climate for personal growth, spirited competition, and loyal community support.

Conflict Resolution

If there is a disagreement between coach and player or parent, the following steps must be followed to resolve the situation:

- 1 The student and/or parent should talk to the coach about their concerns.
- 2 If these concerns are not resolved, the student or parent talks to the Director of Student Activities.
- 3 If necessary, student or parent requests a joint meeting with the coach and the Director of Student Activities
- 4 If necessary, the student or parent informs the Principal of the situation in writing, and the Principal can call all parties together for a meeting.

Coaches and school administration believe that following this procedure offers the best chance for positive resolution of problems. Not following these steps may delay resolution.

NOTE ► Nothing in this provision shall supersede the authority of the Principal or other administrator to discipline a student-athlete or the policies and procedures set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, School Board Policy 9.34.

Parent Meetings

At the beginning of each season, the athletic department conducts a parent information meeting. Information at this meeting covers the following: athletic standards of conduct, student eligibility provisions, the risk of injuries, transportation policy, school attendance policy, message from the Athletic Boosters Association, and any other information pertinent to a particular sport.

Mustang Athletic Boosters Association

MABA is an official affiliated organization of the Falls Church City Public Schools. The purpose of the Athletic Boosters is to encourage, maintain and further the participation of parents, teachers, and other members of the community to enjoy and support all athletic programs of MHS. The Boosters raise funds to sponsor awards and scholarships, hold special events and programs, and maintain grants to support the athletic team's special equipment needs. All families are invited to attend Boosters meetings and programs. Boosters members are eligible for discounted admission passes. For more information, visit their website <https://www.mustangboosters.com/home> or Meridian Athletics Website <https://mustangsports.org/>

Related Publications

The Virginia High School League Handbook, published annually, is the official guide to individual eligibility requirements and the administration of statewide interscholastic athletics. League member schools and their individual representatives are required to observe and comply with its policies.

Locally, Falls Church City Public Schools (FCCPS) maintains a policy manual with current school rules and regulations regarding student behavior. When cited in this handbook, references to FCCPS policies are noted as “School Board Policy...” The Student Code of Conduct—known officially as the Falls

Church Education Community: Rights and Responsibilities, Student Code of Conduct is listed as School Board Policy 9.34.

For more information on a specific regulation or policy, visit these websites:

- Virginia High School League: www.vhsl.org. Click on VHSL Handbook
- Falls Church City Public Schools: <http://www.fccps.org>. Follow these links: School Board→ Policies and Regulation

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

MHS offers students in grades 8 through 12 the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics provided they meet the following Virginia High School League (VHSL) individual eligibility rules. The VHSL Handbook contains interpretations and exceptions for many of the individual eligibility rules to aid students and schools in complying with them. Students may request a copy of the complete rules sections from the Director of Student Activities or by consulting the VHSL website at www.vhsl.org.

Highlights of the VHSL “Individual Eligibility Regulations: General Rules Applicable to All

Students” (VHSL Athletic Handbook, 2026–27)

28A-1-1 Age Rule

The student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.

than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation; and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding semester.

28A-2-1 Bona Fide Student Rule

The student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents.

28A-6-1 Semester Rule

The student shall not have been enrolled in the last four years of high school for a period of more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the semester in which he/she was enrolled for the first time in the ninth grade. The eight consecutive semesters shall be counted continuously from that point, regardless of whether or not he/she remains continuously enrolled in school.

28A-3-1 Enrollment Rule

The student shall have been regularly enrolled in the school which he/she represents not later than the fifteenth school day of the semester.

28A-4-1 Grade Rule

The student shall be enrolled in the last four years of high school. Students may compete on the sub-varsity level while in the eighth grade; however, no student below the eighth grade level is eligible to participate in any VHSL interscholastic contest.

28A-7-1 Transfer Rule

The student shall not have enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parents, parent, or guardian. The sending and receiving VHSL school principals are required to complete and file the VHSL Transfer Form, acknowledging that to the best of their knowledge the student has met all aspects of the transfer rule or its exceptions.

28A-5-1 Scholarship Rule

(a) For the first semester be currently enrolled in not fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation; and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediately preceding year or the immediately preceding semester for schools that certify credit on a semester basis; and (b) For the second semester be currently enrolled in not fewer

(1) A student shall become eligible for interscholastic competition after he/she has been enrolled in the school for 365 consecutive calendar days.

(5) A student entering the eighth grade for the first time becomes immediately eligible in the high school in which he/she enrolls regardless of his or her residence status.

A student entering the ninth grade for the first time becomes immediately eligible in the high school in which he/she enrolls regardless of his or her residence status.

28B-1-1 All-Star Participation Rule

Only students of member schools who have completed their eligibility in a sport may participate in all-star games in that sport.

28B-2-1 Amateur Rule

A student who represents a school in an interscholastic sport shall be an amateur in that sport. An amateur athlete is one who engages in athletic competition solely for the physical, mental, solely for the physical, mental, social and pleasure benefits derived therefrom.

28B-3-1 Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Rule

The student shall have submitted to the Principal of his/her school, prior to becoming a member of any school athletic squad or team, League Form No. 2 (Athletic

Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form), completely filled in and properly signed, attesting that he/she has been examined and found to be physically fit for athletic competition, and that his/her parents' consent to his/her participation.

28B-4-1 Awards Rule

Students may accept permissible awards presented or approved by the student's school.

28B-5-1 College Participation Rule

The student shall not have been a member of a college team in the sport in which he/she desires to represent his/her high school.

28B-6-1 Independent Team Rule

During the sports season for the relevant sport, a student may, while a member of a school squad or team engaged in interscholastic sports become a member of or participate with an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school's control so long as such participation does not conflict with the scheduled activities of the school squad or team.

Eligibility (continued)

Local Rules

The Principal shall be authorized to make and enforce any local rule supplementary to League rules and regulations, but not inconsistent with them. The authority of a Principal to impose and enforce such local rules is absolute and will not be subject to League review. The League will not question the right of any Principal to exclude any student in his/her school from participation in any League activity at any time. The student or parent may appeal the principal's declaration of ineligibility to the District Committee by writing to the district chairman. (VHSL 27-8-10, Local Rules: VHSL 28C-1-1 Due Process Rule)

Eligibility Requirements for Transfer Students

A student who transfers to Meridian High School and does not yet satisfy all eligibility criteria must meet the following requirements in order to practice with a MHS athletic team. (Local authority under VHSL 27-10-3)

- Receive the coach's permission with concurrence from the Director of Student Activities
- Complete a VHSL physical
- Sign a statement acknowledging that, as an ineligible student, he or she is not covered by the VHSL catastrophic insurance policy
- Attend all scheduled meetings, practices and events (in street clothes) or risk forfeiting the privilege of participation
- Refrain from participating in any interscholastic scrimmages, meets, games, matches or contests until eligibility is established

Reminder► A MHS student who has lost the privilege of participating in school athletics for disciplinary reasons is not eligible to participate on a MHS athletic team until the principal declares the student eligible.

To Be a MHS Mustang YOU MUST:

- 1. Be a full-time, regular bona fide student in good standing at MHS**
- 2. Complete a VHSL physical**
- 3. Have adequate insurance coverage**
- 4. Fill out and return all the necessary forms**
- 5. Commit to being part of the team**
- 6. Read and abide by all the rules in this handbook**

Forms

Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form (League Form No. 2)

All student athletes must submit to the school principal VHSL League Form No. 2 (Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form) completely filled in and properly signed, prior to participating in any practice or tryout. No other forms are acceptable, and no exceptions will be made. The form is available from the VHSL website at www.vhsl.org. (VHSL 28B-3-1)

Students who have been medically examined once during the period of May 1 of the current year through June 30 of the succeeding year (14 months) do not have to be examined again during that period unless they have a serious injury or a serious illness. In case of a serious illness or serious injury, the medical doctor or doctor of osteopathy treating the student should specify in his or her release that the student is approved for athletic participation for the remainder of the school year.

► Penalty for providing false information

Any student, parent or guardian who gives false information, written or verbal, regarding a student's eligibility will cause that student to be declared ineligible at any VHSL school for a period of one year from the date the information is certified as being false. This penalty applies to any VHSL eligibility rule and includes attempts to use fake, forged or expired physical exam information.

(VHSL 30-4-3)

Publicity Consent Form

By signing the VHSL physical form, parents and students give their consent for their picture, name and likeness to appear in school or VHSL publications. Parents who choose to "opt-out" of the release of directory information during the FCCPS InfoSnap registration process will create a conflict between the FCCPS process and the VHSL process. If you have a question or request regarding the release of your child's name and picture in connection with their athletic participation, please contact the Director of Student Activities prior to the season.

Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment Form

MHS requires student-athletes to read the Athletic Handbook including the Appendices and to sign the Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment Form (Appendix B) prior to athletic participation. You can also satisfy this requirement through the online registration process.

MHS Medical/Physical Update Form (MHS Supplement to VHSL League Form No. 2)

Any changes in a student's medical or physical condition must be provided to the coach using the MHS

Medical/Physical Update supplement form. (Appendix C)

Insurance

A student must have adequate health insurance to be allowed to participate in school athletics. A student can fulfill the insurance requirement by providing the name of a family medical insurance provider and policy number or by purchasing student accident insurance through the school. Students who desire to participate in contact football are further required to purchase a separate premium (available through the school) expressly for contact football and must show proof of coverage prior to attending practice. Information about student accident insurance can be obtained by contacting the Director of Student Activities.

Tryouts

Students must meet all eligibility requirements, including having the results of a valid physical exam on file, in order to try out for a MHS athletic team. Because there is no guarantee a student will make the team, the school does not reimburse a student for any expense associated with trying out—including, but not limited to, the cost of the athletic physical or equipment purchased in anticipation of making the team.

Procedures

The dates, times and format for team tryouts are posted by the respective coaches and Director of Student Activities via Schoology, the school morning announcements and on the school's athletic Website: <https://mustangsports.org/>. Check the "Sports" pages for information.

Prospective athletes must follow the tryout procedure set by the coaches. Absences from tryouts for any reason may hinder a student's chances of making the team. Athletes should discuss matters of this type with the coach and Director of Student Activities. Tryouts are held regardless of holidays or vacations, and candidates are expected to be present for all sessions. Students participating in an exceptional academic opportunity, as determined by the Director of Student Activities, will be permitted a late tryout. Tryouts are held over at least a three-day period. There may be double sessions when school is not in session. Weather conditions may necessitate an indoor format or may extend the tryout period.

Notification

After the third day (minimally) of tryouts, those not progressing will be notified personally by the coach. Any additional cuts follow the same format for notification. Trying out for a second, same season sport after being cut from another one is allowed at the discretion of the coaches and the Director of Student Activities. Once an athlete leaves a team for another sport, he or she cannot switch back. Before considering switching sports, athletes should meet with the Director of Student Activities for guidance.

Special Circumstances

There is some overlapping of sports seasons. Students who are participating in a previous season's sport may not quit that sport to practice in another. There is no penalty or disadvantage in the second sport because of this rule.

Tryout periods **must** be extended for one or more candidates under the following circumstances:

1. The candidate is involved in another MHS athletic team whose season has not yet been completed. Tryout periods **may** be extended for one or more candidates under the following circumstances:

1. The candidate is returning after having a significant injury.
2. Candidate was not enrolled as a student at MHS during the initial tryout period but, upon enrolling, meets ALL eligibility requirements.
3. The number of participants in a given sport drops below an acceptable level.

Tryout periods **may not** be extended for any MHS student who is unavailable for tryouts due to a conflict with family vacations, appointments or participation on any non-school athletic team. Candidates should discuss these situations with the coach as soon as possible.

Selection

The Director of Student Activities approves player selection decisions made by the coach. Once approved, the selections are final, and changes are made only if a selected candidate declines participation. Candidates have the opportunity to hear from the coach his or her rationale for the selections. Parents seeking further information may contact the coach. However, no selection decision is changed without prior approval by the Director of Student Activities. Candidates and their parents must respect the decisions of the coach. Any inappropriate language or behavior directed toward the coach by the candidate or their parent or guardian may result in the candidate being suspended from further athletic participation.

Tryouts (continued)

The goals of the tryout process are:

- 1 To evaluate the relative ability of the candidates and determine which candidates are likely to contribute the most to the program
- 2 To select the candidates that will benefit the most from the experience
- 3 To maintain a roster size that maximizes practice and playing opportunities for participants
- 4 To maintain a roster size that can be properly uniformed and equipped within the constraints of the athletic department budget

The coach will determine roster size with guidance from the Director of Student Activities.

Drops

A 'drop' is defined as a decision by an athlete, parent or guardian that the student will no longer participate in the sport for the remainder of that season. When dropping from a team, an athlete must discuss the situation with the coach before the drop is finalized. If the drop is finalized, all equipment that was issued must be returned in good condition as soon as possible. Dropping from a team is a very drastic step that disrupts much of the work the team accomplished up to that point. An athlete and his or her parent or guardian should consult with the coach prior to making this decision.

The following policies stress the importance of making the decision to participate and to fulfill that commitment:

- A student may not drop from a sport that conducted tryouts and subsequent cuts, and then participate in another sport in the same sport season.
- An athlete wishing to change from one sport (that did not have a tryout and cut) to another sport during that season must request and be granted permission from each of the coaches involved.
- An athlete may not drop from a team after the first scrimmage or regular season contest (whichever is earlier) and participate in another sport in the same season.
- An athlete may not drop from a team after the first two weeks of the season and return to that team in the same season once the drop is finalized and the athlete is removed from the roster.
- An athlete who drops from a team after the first scrimmage or contest (whichever is earlier) must meet with the Director of Student Activities and his or her parent or guardian before he or she is allowed to participate in another sport in another season.
- A parent or guardian who is considering pulling an athlete from a team because of academic concerns should discuss this decision with the Director of Student Activities.
- An athlete who drops from a sport because of academic concerns must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the school administration that he or she has corrected any academic deficiencies prior to any further participation in any athletic program.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Athletic Code and Training Rules

As a participant in the athletic program, a student-athlete receives special opportunities for personal development and, in return, agrees to abide by the athletic code (Appendix A) and training rules. Individual coaches may impose additional rules appropriate to their sport. The coaches will communicate these rules to the athletes and their parents or guardians in writing prior to the start of the season.

The MHS athletic department places a strong emphasis on good training habits, not only during the training season, but also for life. By staying physically fit and drug (including tobacco and nicotine products) and alcohol free, student-athletes can perform their best and meet their responsibilities on the playing field and in the classroom. **Student-athletes who do not adhere to these rules risk losing their eligibility to participate in athletics for part or all of the season.**

Academic Requirements

All athletes are expected to fulfill their academic requirements to the best of their ability. When athletic program events conflict with mandatory curriculum-based activities, athletes must attend curriculum-based activities. Every effort should be made to avoid these conflicts, including voluntary participation in extended-day or overnight field trips.

Athletes may schedule additional time to work with a faculty member (beyond the 3:00 to 3:45 PM time period), which may require missing all or part of athletic practice time. A coach may in turn require varsity athletes to attend additional conditioning or athletic instructional sessions.

Varsity athletes are expected to organize their time so that they can maintain satisfactory academic achievement. Athletes' primary responsibility is to their studies; therefore, they must give priority to makeup tests, tutoring sessions, reviews, etc.

Athletes may not use practice as an excuse to miss a makeup test or avoid an academic responsibility. MHS coaches have been advised of this policy. It is the athlete's responsibility to advise the coach if he or she will be late to practice due to an academic priority.

Participation in practices or late-ending games is not accepted by the faculty as a reason to postpone taking a test or handing in a project. Generally, varsity athletes know of assignments and exams well in advance, and part of being a quality student-athlete is managing time to achieve maximum performance, first in the classroom, and then on the field.

Attendance at School

Athletes should maintain exemplary attendance records at all times. To participate in any after-school practice or competition, a student must be in school by **9:30AM** and remain in school for the rest of the day. If an athlete is dismissed from school prior to the end of the regular school day to attend an athletic event, he or she must not leave school grounds prior to leaving for the event (which will be on school-provided transportation).

If an athlete must be absent from school for appointments or family emergencies, the Principal, Director of Student Activities or Assistant Director of Student Activities may allow participation in the sport, with the following provisions:

- In the case of an appointment, a written request should be made in advance of the appointment to the coaches, and MHS Attendance.
- In the event of a family emergency, the student should contact the Principal or Director of Student Activities when he or she returns to school, and the Principal determines whether participation in the sport is allowed

Practices and Contests

Schedules

Coaches make practice schedules available prior to the start of each sport's season. Changes to the schedule are communicated to team members as far in advance as possible. Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments around practice schedules.

Athletes should be aware that there are practices and events on Saturday and during holidays, as well as during school vacations. Attendance at these team meetings is required.

The length of practice is not limited, but athletes can make them shorter by coming into the season in peak physical condition and committing themselves to hard, efficient practices.

Attendance

All athletes are required to attend all scheduled team practices and contests unless specifically excused for medical, religious, or other reasons deemed appropriate by the coach and/or Director of Student Activities.

Athletes should be prepared to practice on Saturdays and during school vacations. Outside commitments that restrict practice attendance on Saturdays and during school vacations are not acceptable. Athletes who miss practice will be subject to discipline by the coach and/or Director of Student Activities. This policy does not apply to absences for religious reasons.

Athletes cannot miss practices or events to attend other extra-curricular activities. This is one of the sacrifices athletes must make and is essential to team building.

Practice Attire

For safety reasons, athletes should not wear necklaces, rings, earrings, or watches while training, practicing or participating in games. Athletes should bring appropriate clothing for workouts in various weather conditions and dry items for after practice. Members of outdoor teams must keep gym shoes in their lockers in case practice is moved indoors.

Student Pick-Up Following Practices and Games

Since the coaches or designated school officials are required to remain on site until all team members have vacated the premises, athletes and their parents must make transportation arrangements in advance. Habitual failure to be picked up on time may result in dismissal from the team. Parents should be on time for pick up after games and practices.

Dual Sport Participation

No athlete can participate in two or more sports seasons that run concurrently or nearly concurrently without special permission granted by the two coaches and the DSA.

Equipment and Uniforms

Team uniforms, warm ups, and equipment are the property of Meridian High School and should be treated with care. Athletes are required to follow the guidelines listed below to maintain their appearance and quality.

Care and Maintenance

- **Keep your uniform clean**—Ask the DSA for a uniform-laundering care sheet and follow the provided laundry instructions.
- **Wear your uniform only on game or meet days**—Uniforms and warm-ups are for game use only and not for street wear. They may not be worn for personal use as a jacket or for practice sessions.
- **Replace damaged equipment**—Look for and return any damaged equipment for replacement if no longer safe or functional.
- **Keep your uniform and equipment safe**—Each athlete is solely responsible for all the equipment and uniform components signed out in his or her name. Lost, stolen or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at the athlete's expense.
- **Report any loss, theft or damage to your coach**—Lost, stolen, or intentionally damaged uniforms or equipment must be replaced at cost. Cost may include replacing a complete set when items cannot be replaced individually. The athlete is notified in writing of the amount he or she owes.

NOTE ► The athletic department supervises maintenance and usage of sports-appropriate protective equipment, including mouth guards recommended for contact and collision sports.

Return Policy

All uniforms and equipment must be returned in good condition and on the date specified by the coach, or athletes are charged the replacement cost. Compensation is required regardless of whether or not the athlete still has the item!

Return Deadlines

Athletes not participating in consecutive sports seasons must return all equipment and uniforms by the following dates:

Fall ► December 1 Winter ► March 1 Spring ► End of Season

Penalties

Failure to return equipment and uniforms in good condition and on time will result in the following consequences:

- 1 Athletes are not permitted to practice or tryout for another sport until the school is compensated for all unreturned items.
- 2 Athletes may be required to pay a deposit before a subsequent season's uniform is issued.
- 3 The school may seek reimbursement for the equipment by all lawful means.

In addition, senior athletes who are delinquent on returning their equipment at the end of the school year will not be issued caps and gowns until the equipment and uniforms are turned in and/or paid for.

Locker Room

When space allows, all athletes will be issued a locker in the "team locker room." Junior varsity athletes may have to share a locker.

Coaches secure the locker rooms during practice.

Athletes should not leave personal items anywhere in the locker room, gym, hallways or field areas. Athletes are not allowed to go back and retrieve forgotten items.

The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen items. Report any missing items to the Director of Student Activities and your coach.

Food and drinks are only permitted in the locker rooms under the supervision of the coach during team meetings or during the half time of contests.

Cellphone usage is prohibited in the locker rooms. This includes making phone calls and taking pictures and videos.

Please be considerate when the "away" team, our guests, is using MHS locker rooms. Do not enter the area under any circumstances. If an athlete must get into the locker room, he or she must see the Director of Student Activities, coach, or an administrator; only they have the authority to let an athlete into the locker room when a visiting team is present.

When MHS teams are competing, athletes should make every effort to avoid being in the locker room when it is being used as a team meeting space by another sports team.

On days when MHS hosts a visiting team, the physical education locker rooms will be off-limits to MHS students two hours before the contest. MHS athletes must remove any items in the locker room prior to this time. Any athlete entering a locker room after this time will be subject to disciplinary action as required.

In-season teams will be responsible for the general cleanliness of the locker rooms. Team members may have to remain after practice or arrive on the weekends to remedy any problems.

Substance Abuse

In keeping with Falls Church City Public Schools policies and regulations, the MHS athletic department prohibits the use of any tobacco products, alcohol and illegal substances (School Board Policy 9.36, Substance Abuse; School Board Policy GBEC/JFHA-F: Tobacco-Free School For Staff and Students) to include e-cigarettes and nicotine (School Board Policy GBECA). Student-athletes who violate these policies either on or off school property, during the training season or during the off- season may be denied the privilege of participating in athletic practices or contests.

The MHS athletic department believes that substance abuse jeopardizes the health and safety of the individual, and compromises a student-athlete's and possibly the team's ability to perform at their competitive best. To provide an environment where all students can achieve academic, athletic, and personal development and success, MHS applies the following procedures for substance abuse reporting and violations.

Reporting

Parents, students and members of the coaching staff who have knowledge of particular information about substance abuse violations are bound by the same reporting requirements:

All incidents of substance abuse must be reported to the Principal, even if the information comes from self-referral. (School Board Policy 3.21)

Specific information may involve the use, possession, distribution or influence of illegal drugs and other prohibited substances including anabolic steroids and tobacco products while engaged in or attending a school activity, being on a school bus, or being on school property.

Consequences

- Any student-athlete who violates School Board policies on substance abuse (9.36) or criminal activity off school property (9.34) may be denied the privilege to participate in all athletic activities for a period determined by the Principal. (School Board Policy 9.36 and 9.36R, Substance Abuse; School Board Policy 9.34 - Jurisdiction)
- If substance abuse occurs off school property and does not result in criminal charges or suspension under School Board policies, the student may still be denied the privilege of participating in athletic contests or practices by his or her coach as a violation of training rules.
- If a student admits an ongoing situation involving his or her own substance abuse, the athletic department follows the school procedures for "Substance Abuse: Self Referral" outlined in School

Board Policy 9.36R. The student is required to undergo evaluation and treatment for the ongoing abuse. Because ongoing abuse may increase the likelihood of harm to the student-athlete during athletic practices and contests, a doctor's medical release and clearance to participate is required to allow a student-athlete to continue to participate. The coach, in consultation with the director of athletics, may also impose a penalty on practice and contest participation. The penalty may be reduced if the reporting is voluntary or freely admitted when confronted.

Travel Rules

Away Contest Procedures and Transportation

Athletes representing MHS should dress and act appropriately at all times while visiting another school. Athletes who cannot do so will be prohibited from traveling with the team.

Athletes are strongly advised not to travel with expensive jewelry, large amounts of cash, or other valuable items. An athlete who does so is responsible for the safekeeping of these items; MHS or the host school may not be held responsible for damage, loss or theft.

Athletes should bring just enough money to pay for meals required during the trip. Traveling teams are not required to stop for a meal after every away contest. Coaches judge the appropriateness in all cases.

Transportation to all athletic contests is provided by the school via school bus, commercial coach, or rented vehicle. All athletes and support personnel must travel to and from the contest in school transportation. Athletes are not permitted to drive themselves, drive other students, or ride with other students to athletic contests. Exceptions may be granted for exceptional circumstances, and only if a written request is made to the Director of Student Activities by the parent/guardian at least one school day in advance of the trip. The request for exception will be judged individually and may or may not be granted.

Athletes are expected to be ready to board the bus at the time designated by the coach. Coaches are instructed not to wait for tardy athletes. Habitually tardy athletes may face disciplinary action by the coach or Director of Student Activities.

Athletes are expected to travel to contests in appropriate attire as dictated by the coach. Coaches inform team members of the appropriate travel attire at a pre-season meeting or on the first day of practice.

The mode of transportation (school bus, rented vehicle or commercial coach) is determined by weighing cost, distance (on school nights), number of people traveling and availability.

While participating in away contests, athletes must remain in the designated venue for the activity that is taking place. Athletes are not permitted to leave the venue unless accompanied by a coach. Locations on campus are not necessarily considered part of the event venue.

Late Return from Away Contest on a School Night

If a team returns from an away contest after 12:00 midnight, athletes and student support personnel may report to school no later than one hour after normal start time without being counted as tardy. Athletes are given an additional hour for every hour after 12:00 midnight that they arrive. It is the coach's responsibility to inform the Director of Student Activities of the return time.

Athletes who miss a test or quiz because of their late arrival must make up that test or quiz after school on the same day, or at the teacher's earliest convenience.

Overnight Travel

Occasionally, a team travels overnight for a contest or tournament. Athletes are held to all school policies for the duration of the trip. Essentially, the athlete will be "on school grounds" for the entire trip, and any violation of school policy triggers the appropriate disciplinary action by the school. If an athlete disrupts the team or is a danger to himself or others, the parent or guardian is called and the athlete is sent home. If the parent or guardian cannot pick the athlete up in a timely manner, the athletes may be placed on public transportation at the athlete's expense.

Meal Money

Meal money paid for by the school may be provided for overnight trips that result from regional or state play-off or tournament participation.

VHSL Fines

Any student-athlete whose actions cause Meridian High School to be fined by the VHSL is responsible for reimbursing the school for such fines. Actions that may result in the school being fined include but are not be limited to: providing false information; unsportsmanlike conduct before, during or after a contest; leaving the bench area during a physical or verbal altercation; fighting; or damage to school or facility property. The fines range from \$100 – \$300 per incident.

VHSL Sportsmanship Code

Responsibilities of School Administrators, Athletes, Coaches and Spectators for Sportsmanship at Athletic Events

VHSL member schools are required to conduct all relations with other schools in the spirit of good sportsmanship. Violations to this code must be reported to the Virginia High School League. The complete VHSL Code for Interscholastic Athletics is attached at Appendix D, and applies to athletes, coaches, administrators, officials and spectators.

Penalties for violations of the sportsmanship code may include:

- **For spectators:** Comments directed at an opposing player, coach or official results in immediate dismissal from that contest and may result in a suspension from attendance to any MHS athletic event for an indeterminate length of time. Spectators are to respect and obey property regulations established by each school. Spectators are always to regard the official's decision as final. These rules are in effect at both home and away games for Meridian HS athletes, student spectators, parents and visitors, even when not observed by opposing teams and fans. Failure to meet these standards results in disciplinary action. Situations are to be reported to the Principal via the Director of Student Activities. Any students or parents involved in violations of the sportsmanship code must meet with the Principal and Director of Student Activities before being allowed to attend another MHS athletic event. No one who leaves the facility is allowed back inside. Failure to comply with any portion of the above policy may mean removal from the contest and forfeiture of attendance at future contests.
- **For athletes:** Individual penalties are assessed as required by VHSL. The student-athletes may also face dismissal from the team as well as further disciplinary action as warranted depending upon the nature of the violation.
- **For coaches and administrators:** School and individual penalties are assessed as required by VHSL
- **For officials:** Individual penalties are assessed as required by VHSL

Specific penalties may be imposed against a school for violations of these provisions

ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

Penalties for Code, Handbook, and Training Rules Violations

Student-athletes at MHS are subject to the same standards of student conduct that apply to all students. Student-athletes are further subject to standards of conduct described in this handbook, in the provisions of the VHSL Handbook and in the athletic department's training rules.

Because of the rigorous demands of competition and the responsibility to their team, athletes who violate these rules, in or out of season, may be denied the opportunity to become members of an athletic team for part or all of an athletic season.

There may be circumstances in which a student-athlete's behavior triggers consequences under more than one set of rules. It is necessary, therefore, to set a priority for application of these rules.

Violation of an athletic training rule or locally adopted rule contained in the MHS athletic handbook If a student-athlete violates an athletic training rule or a locally adopted rule contained in the athletic handbook, the coach, in consultation with the DSA, determines an appropriate sanction.

The proposed sanctions may include:

- assignment of additional team responsibilities
- an assigned probationary period—during which a violation would trigger further sanctions
- suspension from practices or contests
- dismissal from the team

The coach's decision is final.

If the proposed sanction includes either suspension from athletic participation for a length of time (to be determined up to one calendar year) or prohibition from participating in athletics at MHS, additional procedural steps are provided.

- The original violation report is made known to the parent or guardian by a letter sent by the Director of Student Activities within 24 hours of receiving the violation notification, excluding weekends and holidays. This letter informs the parent or guardian of the violation, penalty policy, proposed sanction and hearing procedures. The student-athlete is suspended until the results of the hearing. If a hearing is requested by the athlete, the student and parent or guardian are informed by letter within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, of the results and the decision of the Director of Student Activities in consultation with the Principal.
- A student-athlete has the right to appeal these sanctions by submitting a written request to the Principal within five working days of the decision. A designated administrator hears the appeal, and a decision on the appeal is made within 10 working days.

Violation of a VHSL individual eligibility rule (other than the “in good standing rule”)

If the conduct of the student-athlete appears to violate a VHSL individual eligibility rule (other than the “in good standing rule”), then the procedures for resolving the question are those provided in the VHSL handbook. The potential consequence is limited to participation in VHSL activity practices and contests.

Violation of the Student Code of Conduct as well as violation of the VHSL’s “in good standing rule”

If the conduct of the student-athlete is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct, as well as in violation of the VHSL’s “in good standing rule,” then the procedures in school board policies 9.34 (Student Code of Conduct) and 9.26 (Suspensions and Expulsions) apply. Depending upon the consequence imposed that is based on those procedures; a determination may need to be made regarding the student's participation in VHSL activity practices and contests.

Penalties for School Disciplinary Action

An athlete may lose the privilege to participate in any athletic practice or contest as a disciplinary measure under School Board policy 9.34 (Student Code of Conduct). Specific penalties associated with the following disciplinary actions are:

- **In-school suspension**— An athlete serving an in-school suspension is ineligible to participate in any athletic practice or contest on the school day that the in-school suspension is served.
- **Out-of-school suspension**— An athlete serving an out-of-school suspension is ineligible to participate in any athletic practice or contest for the duration of the out-of-school suspension.

An athlete declared ineligible by the Principal is not allowed to practice with the team until eligibility is restored. The VHSL grants school Principal's the authority to make and enforce local rules that supplement League rules; eligibility restrictions imposed under local authority are not subject to League review. (Local authority under VHSL 27-8-10)

Game Disqualifications

A student-athlete who is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike behavior, including a basketball player who receives two technical fouls or a soccer player who receives a red card, may not participate in the next scheduled competition. The athlete is required to meet with the Director of Student Activities before he or she is allowed to practice again with the team.

Upon the second occurrence during the same season, the athlete is suspended from participation for five calendar days or two contests. The athlete and his or her parent or guardian are required to meet with the coach and the Director of Student Activities prior to returning to practice.

A third occurrence during the same sport season results in the athlete's dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season. The athlete and his or her parent or guardian are required to meet with the coach and the Director of Student Activities prior to the student becoming eligible to participate in any other sport at MHS.

An athlete who is ejected from a contest for fighting faces an automatic suspension of three contests and cannot practice with the team during the suspension. An athlete who is ejected from a contest for fighting a second time is dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season. The athlete and his or her parent or guardian are required to meet with the coach and the Director of Student Activities prior to participating in any other sport at MHS. (VHSL Rule 30-5-1 and local rule authority)

Hazing

Meridian High School forbids hazing of any kind. Athletes determined to be a part of any hazing activity are removed from the team and face additional appropriate disciplinary action from the school. Violators are referred to the appropriate local authorities.

Theft & Vandalism

Any athlete found to have committed a theft or vandalism—no matter how inconsequential—on campus or at a visiting school will be dismissed from the team and suspended from participation in the athletic program indefinitely. Additional school or police action may also be appropriate.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is well documented that injury is reduced and performance enhanced when health, fitness, and safety training are supported. Any changes in a student's medical or physical condition must be provided to the coach using the Medical/Physical Update: MHS Supplement to VHSL League Form No. 2 (Appendix C).

Athletic Training Program

MHS provides an on-site allied health care professional to care for your child as they participate in MHS athletics, giving the student-athlete the greatest opportunity to participate in the safest manner possible. The certified athletic trainer (ATC) is responsible to provide not only emergency care to injured athletes, but also provide injury prevention, and rehabilitation and reconditioning of athletic injuries. While the role of the ATC is not to take the place of the family physician, the ATC can act as a liaison between the athletes, coaches, parents and medical community, as well as carry out the direction of a physician regarding care and rehabilitation after an injury. Physician Response forms and Medical Information Release forms are available to help encourage appropriate communication between the treating physician and the ATC regarding a student-athlete's injury or condition. MHS requires the ATC to be informed of all injuries and conditions that impact the participation status of a student athlete by completing the Medical/Physical Update: MHS Supplement to VHSL League Form No. 2 (Appendix C).

Blood Drives

For safety reasons, athletes whose sport is in season are advised not to donate blood on practice or contest days.

Conditioning

The athletic department provides information for training and conditioning appropriate to the sport. A weight room is available to meet training requirements. The athletic department provides appropriate supervision. Courses and training times, as available, are posted in the school.

Injuries

The coaching staff endeavors to reduce the risk of injury by maintaining professional standards; however, as a condition of participating in sports, the athlete and his or her parent or guardian must sign the Acknowledgement of Risk and Insurance Statement on the VHSL physical form. Participation in athletics may result in injury, paralysis or even death; choosing to participate acknowledges these risks.

The athletic trainer provides first aid and injury assessment. Appropriate measures are taken in the event of an incident, and parents are called, if necessary. The selection of a physician or a facility for follow up treatment or rehabilitation is a personal choice, but consultation with the athletic trainer usually results in better medical decisions.

If an athlete receives an injury that prevents full or customary participation in practice or games, he or she will be placed on the school's "Restricted Activities List." The student may not resume full team activity until cleared to do so by a physician, the school's athletic trainer, the coach, the Director of Student Activities and the parent or guardian. Any of these parties has the authority to restrict an athlete's participation.

Any student who suffers serious illness or injury is suspended from athletic participation until pronounced physically fit to participate by a physician. (VHSL 27-8-8) Athletes must complete and return the Medical/Physical Update form attached as Appendix C.

Nutrition

The MHS Athletic department will: (1) encourage proper nutritional conditioning for the athlete's sport, (2) encourage appropriate diets and hydration for athletic performance, (3) discourage inappropriate diets for weight loss, (4) discourage inappropriate performance-enhancing drugs and activities.

Public Health

Information regarding exposure to communicable diseases and blood-borne pathogens is covered in School Board policy 9.18

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

Students may accept awards presented or approved by the student's school. Only the school administration may grant an award to a student athlete. This rule also includes gifts that are symbolic in nature such as rings, watches, jackets, etc., as well as trophies and plaques. Only awards officially sanctioned by the school administration may be granted to student-athletes regardless of the funding of such awards. (VHSL 28B-4-1 Awards Rule)

Criteria for Varsity Letters

Meridian HS is proud of its letter winners. Lettering represents an accomplishment in dedication, perseverance and skill. Letters are not earned for making the team; they are earned for contributing to the team. The following lettering requirements are set to maintain the prestige associated with the award.

Letter Award To qualify to receive a letter award, the athlete or manager must complete the varsity season in good standing as a member of the squad. Varsity coaches will inform all team members of additional letter requirements in writing prior to the start of the season. Subsequent varsity seasons will earn a sport specific pin and/or a gold bar.

Letter Jacket The school is also proud that a student might purchase a letter jacket and represent our school outside of our normal school community. Only a letter winner can wear a jacket with a varsity letter. Because students are representing our school when they are wearing their letter jackets, the following rules apply to a letter jacket. The school-issued letter is the letter to be used and should be worn on the left chest area of the jacket. The year of graduation may be worn on the left shoulder. Symbols or names for sports lettered in may be printed on the back of the jacket. Only medals won while representing

Meridian HS may be worn on the jacket. All-District, regional and state recognition may be designated by a patch to be worn on a sleeve. The Director of Student Activities must approve any other symbol, patch, or emblem.

Varsity Letter Requirements for Managers To be eligible for a varsity letter as a particular sport's full time **manager**, a student must serve that sport in this capacity for at least two years, one at the varsity level. A student who serves as a manager for the sport at other levels (JV/Frosh) for three consecutive years is also eligible for a varsity letter.

Certificates

Members of the junior varsity team who meet the general eligibility requirements will receive a certificate for each sport and level of participation provided they finish the season in good standing. Members of the varsity team who meet the general and specific eligibility requirements will receive a varsity certificate for each sport in which this status is achieved provided they finish the season in good standing. Team members are also eligible for special awards at the end of the season.

Scholarships

Varsity coaches will nominate deserving seniors for the Athletic Boosters Association scholarships. The Boosters association selects the award recipients.

Recognition Nights

At the end of each season, the athletic department will host an Awards Banquet. All teams must attend for their requisite season to honor varsity athletes and award-winning teams. Team awards, individual awards and scholarships are presented at this time

APPENDIX A

Meridian High School Athletic

Standards of Conduct Code

Contribute all that you can to the athletic program, to the best of your ability. Conduct yourself in a safe, orderly and respectful manner at all times—both on and off the playing field.

Respect school faculty, staff and fellow students. Maintain good attendance, seek excellence in academic performance and practice good citizenship. Promote the learning environment and show school spirit. Be a positive leader. On the field, respect your teammates, opponents, fans, officials and coaches. Know and abide by all rules of the game, and exhibit exemplary sportsmanship at all times in victory and defeat. As a guest at opposing schools, be a model representative of Falls Church City, Meridian High School, and the team. Be courteous and respectful of the host school and its facilities. Do not drink or possess alcoholic beverages. Do not use or possess narcotics or other illegal drugs.

Do not use or possess tobacco or nicotine in any form. In season, abide by the training rules regarding curfew, nutrition and other requirements of your individual sport.

During the off-season, make every effort to meet or exceed the training requirements of your coach. Commit to being part of a team and willingly accept the personal sacrifices that come with participation.

APPENDIX B

Meridian High School Athletic Handbook Acknowledgment Form

Student Athlete: _____ Sport: _____

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read and understand the Meridian HS Athletic Handbook and Social Media Guidelines (Appendix E). I recognize that my child must abide by all policies therein in order to remain eligible to participate in the Athletic Program, and understand that violating the policies will result in the loss of that privilege. Therefore, I support and accept the policies of the school, including those that prohibit the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, while my child is involved in any athletic activity.

Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

As a student participant in the MHS athletic program, I have read and understand the Meridian HS Athletic Handbook to include the Standards of Conduct Code (Appendix A). I recognize that I must abide by all policies therein in order to remain eligible to participate in the athletic program, and understand that violating the policies will result in the loss of that privilege. Therefore, I support and accept the policies of the school, including those that prohibit the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, while I am involved in any athletic activity.

Signature of Student-Athlete Date

By signing below, you (student athlete) affirm that you understand the Meridian High School Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes (Appendix E) and the requirements that you must adhere to as a MHS student-athlete. Also, you affirm that failure to adhere to this policy and guidelines may result in consequences that include suspension from your athletic team, and you may be subject to additional penalties imposed by the school and/or school division.

Signature of Student-Athlete Date

APPENDIX C

Meridian High School Medical/ Physical Update

(MHS Supplement to VHSL League Form No. 2)

PURPOSE: Communication is vitally important to the continued care of the athlete. This form must be used to communicate to the ATC (certified athletic trainer) any illness or injury treated by a physician,

that occurs after the VHSL League Form No. 2 was completed, and that may affect the care, treatment or participation of the athlete. A separate form may be used for each illness or injury.

Note: If your son or daughter is currently participating in a sport, you should obtain the Physician

Response Form and Medical Information Release Form from the ATC.

Name:	
Grade:	
Diagnosis of Injury or illness?	
Did the injury/illness limit participation in physical activities? If "yes", for how long?	
Date athlete cleared by physician for "Full Participation":	
Any special athlete care instructions?	
Would you like the ATC to contact you about this injury/illness?	

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

VHSL Sportsmanship Code for Interscholastic Athletics

The School Administrator Should:

1. Encourage and promote friendly relationships and good sportsmanship throughout the school by requiring courtesy and proper decorum at all times, by acquainting students and others in the community with ideals of good sportsmanship and by so publicizing these concepts and attitudes that all members of the school community will understand and appreciate their meaning.
2. Insist upon compliance with all rules and regulations for the Virginia High School League.
3. Secure qualified officials for all contests.
4. Insist upon adequate safety provisions for all activities for both participants and spectators.
5. Approve only those activities and schedules that are educationally and physically sound for the student.
6. Encourage all to judge the success of the athletic program on the attitude of the participants and spectators, rather than on the number of games won or lost.
7. Insist that the school cheerleaders exemplify the highest standard of good sportsmanship as a means of inculcating desirable spectator attitudes.
8. Provide adequate hygienic, sanitary and attractive facilities for the dressing and housing of visiting teams and officials.
9. Provide for the efficient handling of all athletic funds, which such safeguards as audits, insurance and proper bookkeeping, to maximize benefits of available funds.
10. Review with staff the Sportsmanship Rule.

The Spectator Should:

1. Realize that he or she represents the school just as definitely as does the member of a team, and therefore, has an obligation to be a true sportsman, encouraging through this behavior the practice of good sportsmanship by others.
2. Recognize that good sportsmanship is more important than victory by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and outstanding examples of sportsmanship and fair play exhibited by either team.
3. Recognize that victory or defeat is of secondary importance to the primary purpose of promoting the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the players through the medium of competition.
4. Treat visiting teams and officials as guests, extending every courtesy. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
5. Respect the judgment and integrity of officials, realizing that their decisions are based upon game conditions as they observe them

The Athlete Should:

1. Be courteous to visiting teams and officials.
2. Play hard to the limit of his or her ability, regardless of discouragement. The true athlete does not give up, nor does he or she quarrel, cheat, bet or grandstand.
3. Retain his or her composure at all times and never leave the bench or enter the playing field or court to engage in a fight.
4. Be modest when successful and be gracious in defeat. A true sportsman does not offer excuses for failures.
5. Maintain a high degree of physical fitness by conscientiously observing team and training rules.
6. Demonstrate loyalty to the school by maintaining a satisfactory scholastic standing and by participating in or supporting other school activities.
7. Play for the love of the game.
8. Understand and observe the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
9. Set a high standard of personal cleanliness.
10. Respect the integrity and judgment of officials and accept their decisions without questions.
11. Respect the facilities of host schools and the trust entailed in being a guest.

The Coach Should:

1. Exemplify behavior that is representative of the educational staff of the school and a credit to the teaching profession.
2. Demonstrate high ideals, good habits and desirable attitudes in personal behavior and demand the same standards of the players.
3. Emphasize to players and bench personnel the importance of proper sideline behavior and the necessity of restraining from entering the playing field or court to engage in a fight.
4. Recognize that the purpose of competition is to promote the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of the individual players and that the most important values of competition are derived from playing the game fairly.
5. Be a modest winner and a gracious loser.
6. Maintain self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions or dissatisfaction with the officials without a public display of emotion.
7. Cooperate with the school Principal in the planning, scheduling and conduct of sports activities.
8. Employ accepted educational methods in coaching, giving all players an opportunity to use and develop initiative, leadership and judgment.
9. Pay close attention to the physical condition and well-being of players, refusing to jeopardize the health of an individual for the sake of improving the team's chances to win.
10. Teach athletes that it is better to lose fairly than win unfairly.
11. Discourage gambling, profanity, abusive language and similar violations of the true sportsmanship code.
12. Refuse to disparage an opponent, an official, or others associated with sports activities.
13. Properly supervise student athletes under his or her immediate care and specifically observe a coach's responsibilities in conjunction with district and state contests.

The Official Should:

1. Know the rules and their interpretations and be thoroughly trained to administer them.
2. Maintain self-control under all conditions.
3. Report for duty well in advance of game time, in a rested condition, with an alert mind and dressed appropriately in the specified uniform.
4. Make clear all interpretations and rulings during the progress of a game, yet conduct the game in an unobtrusive manner.
5. Be impartial and fair yet firm in all decisions. A good official does not attempt to compensate later for an unpopular decision.
6. Refrain from commenting upon or discussing a team, play or game situation with those not immediately concerned.
7. So conduct the games to enlist the cooperation of players, coaches and spectators in the interests of good sportsmanship.
8. Honor all commitments and abide by all school, district, regional and League regulations in a professional manner.

APPENDIX E

MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

Playing and competing for Meridian High School is a privilege. Student-athletes are held in the highest regard and are seen as role models in the community. As leaders you have the responsibility to portray your team, your coaches, our school, and yourselves in a positive manner at all times. Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites have increased in popularity globally, and are used by the majority of student-athletes in one form or another. Student-athletes should be aware that third parties—including the media, faculty, future employers and college officials—could easily access your profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments and posters. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the student-athlete and our school. This can also be detrimental to a student-athlete's future options (i.e. college, profession). Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, comments or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Pictures, videos, comments or posters that condone drug-related activity. This includes but is not limited to images that portray the personal use of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another school; taunting comments aimed at a student-athlete, coach or team at another school and derogatory comments against race and/or gender). No posts should depict or encourage unacceptable, violent or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, and illegal drug use).

If you are ever in doubt of the appropriateness of your online public material, consider whether it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as those of Meridian High School. Remember, always present a positive image and do not do anything to embarrass yourself, the team, your family or Meridian High School.

To participate, you will affirm that you understand the Meridian High School Social Media Guidelines for Student-Athletes and the requirements that you must adhere to as a MHS student-athlete. Also, you affirm that failure to adhere to this policy and guidelines may result in consequences that include suspension from your athletic team, and you may be subject to additional penalties imposed by the school and/or school division.