



MANHATTAN
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS HANDBOOK

2026-2027

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Philosophy of Athletics

Athletics constitutes a part of a balanced Christian educational program and should be administered by coaches and authorities with that end in view. Participation in, and appreciation of, the skill in a sports contest is a part of enjoyable living. The perfectly timed and coordinated activities by which a participant or team strives to achieve and experience success, is an example of proficiency and coordination in life's challenges.

If we had to put our philosophy in three words, we believe they would be faith, humility, and hard work. If any of our athletes are to experience what is mentioned above, it would take a faith in God who is in control of all things, a humility to put Jesus first and others before yourself, and the hard work with a focus to glorify God in our pursuits. Athletics can be the training ground for the individual's sanctification and maturation. Almost everything we do in athletics compares to what the parents of these athletes are doing at home. Our teams must have unity the same as our families and businesses; our teams and athletes must strive for goals just like businesses and executives; our athletes must be concerned about each other just as families are; our athletes must be self-disciplined and exert self-control similar to family and work situations. Our athletes are given the opportunity every day to build character by performing the task at hand; our athletes develop a determination to succeed not only on the scoreboard, but also in a steady progression of their own abilities.

We believe in, and dedicate ourselves to, the service of God. Our work is in dealing with the young lives of those who attend Manhattan Christian on and off the athletic fields. We dedicate ourselves to the task of touching the lives of young people in order that we may be a part of strengthening their faith in God. Because this is our belief, we expect our athletes to reflect Christ-like qualities in all of their lives, and to hold themselves to the high standard of those who are disciples of Jesus.

Objectives of Athletics

Focus

The focus of athletics at Manhattan Christian should be to glorify the Lord. We believe that commitment to a team requires sacrifice and humility to put others before yourself. We believe there is great joy in striving towards a goal much greater than ourselves. The focus for our programs should not be on the wins and losses, but to strive for excellence with full effort and a great attitude.

Pursuit

Intensity of effort and pursuit of excellence are essential – but so are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Christian Response

To teach Christian response in choices of personal conduct, decisions about perseverance and intensity of effort, self-knowledge and self-control under stress, integrity, self-respect, and stewardship.

Relationships

To help the participant learn to serve those around them. To teach the athlete to show great respect for their coaches, teammates, opponents and officials. To show love in the face of adversity.

Athletics at Various Levels

Grades 5-8

Competition should encourage maximum participation by all students who express an interest, in order to give them a good initial experience in athletics. Team members should be given substantial participation time - meaning equal participation time in practice and a reasonable amount of playing time in actual game situations.

Responsibility of the Athlete to Manhattan Christian

Conduct on and Off the Playing Fields or Courts

An athlete is expected to:

1. Treat officials and opponents with respect
2. Control his/her temper at all times
3. Take victory or defeat without emotionalism, gloating or extreme disappointment
4. Congratulate opponents in a sincere manner following either victory or defeat
5. Use their influence on and off the court and field to help curb the degrading of opponents, teammates, coaches or officials.
6. Explain rules and strategies to parents and spectators in order for them to better understand why certain decisions are made.
7. Learn to accept decisions as they are made and abide by them
8. Cooperate with the coach and teammates in promoting good sportsmanship
9. Strive for success in the classroom and on the court/field
10. Have excellent attendance at school and support the overall school program by attending other school functions.
11. Be totally committed to their school team and coach and attend all scheduled practices and contests.
12. Realize that it is an honor and a privilege to represent Manhattan Christian by being on a team. Everyone is watching the actions and language of athletes, both on and off the playing fields.
13. Attends all practices and contests as directed by the coach and is dedicated to their school team.

Dress and Appearance

1. Coaches may establish additional dress code guidelines for teams. Athletes are expected to follow them. Game day dress is set by the athletic department as neat, clean dress slacks or shorts, shirts, sweaters, skirts, blouses or dresses. Dress and skirt length is at or below the knee. Pants must be worn properly - at or above the waist.
2. Hair should be neatly trimmed and of an appropriate length. At the discretion of a coach, you may be required to wear your hair so it will not interfere with your ability to play. For example: Girls, long hair tied back, away from the face. Boys, cut short in back and around the ears and away from the face. No facial hair is allowed for participants.
3. Excessive makeup is not allowed
4. All jewelry is to be removed before practices and contests.

Team Standards and Selection Philosophies

Middle School Level

At the middle school level, the goal is to promote participation, therefore there are no tryouts and everyone can participate. Players may be chosen to participate on a team other than the one established for their grade level. 7th graders may be asked to play on the 8th grade team. All 5th and 6th grade players will participate on the 7th grade team except when games are scheduled for the 5th and 6th

grade level. This is done in order to field full teams for each grade level. Additional teams may be formed for a grade level and additional coaches hired if there are more than fourteen participants for one grade level in basketball or volleyball. Factors considered in forming additional teams will include availability of coaches, practice times, numbers of games, and other related criteria. Students will be equally divided on teams when possible. When a grade has multiple teams, the teams will compete in tournaments if and only if there are an equal number of tournaments or tournament games for all teams. Should coaches decide not to take a full team to a contest or a tournament, they will participate based on their grade level with the higher grades participating first.

Athletic Eligibility Policies and Training Rules

Students of MCS shall be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, including sports, unless they have been declared ineligible for the following reasons:

Academic Ineligibility

All student-athletes are students first. Academic success is the top priority, and participation in athletics is a privilege dependent on maintaining acceptable academic performance.

Grade Checks

- **Grade checks are conducted every Tuesday.**
- **The eligibility period runs from Tuesday to Tuesday**, based on the most recent grade check.
- **Eligibility will not be updated mid-week**, even if a failing grade is improved after the check.

Eligibility Rules

1. A student is **academically ineligible** if they have **one or more failing grades (F)** at the time of a grade check.
2. Each student is allowed **one “week of grace” per school year**. This grace period:
 - Is applied automatically the **first time** a student receives a failing grade on a grade check. Allows the student to remain eligible for **one week** while they work to improve the failing grade.
3. If the failing grade is **not resolved by the following Tuesday**, the student becomes **ineligible** until the next grade check shows the grade is no longer failing.
4. If a student receives another failing grade at any point after using their one grace week—**whether in the same class or a different one**—they become **immediately ineligible** for at least one full week.

Chemical Use Ineligibility

Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to the following: Use, attempting to use, possessing, purchasing, selling, distributing, or assisting another person in the use, attempted use, possession, purchase, sale, or distribution of tobacco, tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and/or look-alike drugs, alcohol, controlled substances, other illegal mood-altering and/or performance-enhancing drugs or chemicals or any other substance used to obtain an altered mental state or “high”. Ineligibility will be

- A. First confirmed violation – Non-participation in competition or performances for 40% of that season’s contests or a maximum of four weeks of regularly scheduled contests
- B. Second and subsequent violations – No participation in competitions for 60% of that season’s contests or a maximum of six school weeks of regularly scheduled contests.

Cheerleaders' penalties will be the schedule of the contest in which they will be participating. Penalties for chemical use violations will carry over from year to year. For example – A violation during the freshman year is a first violation. During the sophomore year another violation is the second offense.

Scheduled Contests

Scheduled contests are defined as any level competition for all sports.

Disciplinary Ineligibility

Student-athletes are expected to demonstrate integrity, respect, and responsibility both on and off the field. Acts of dishonesty, disrespect, or other significant behavioral concerns may result in disciplinary consequences, including temporary or extended ineligibility from athletic participation. Such decisions will be made at the discretion of school administration in consultation with the Athletic Director. Each case will be reviewed individually, in alignment with the values of our athletic program.

Out of Season Violations

If the violation occurs during his/her off-season or if the penalty is not fully administered during his/her sport season, the remaining percentage of the penalty will be applied to the next interscholastic sport season in which the athlete participates. This implies that the athlete will compete in the next sport for the entire season – no late starts or early completion unless there is a season-ending injury.

Practice While Ineligible

While a student is ineligible for competition in an extracurricular activity for a first offense, he/she must be allowed to participate in practices in order to serve the penalty.

Coaches Rules

Coaches/supervisors of extracurricular activities may establish, publish and enforce additional activity participation guidelines and training rules that must be followed by a student if he/she wishes to participate in that activity.

Statute of Limitations

There will be a one school year statute of limitations rule for offenders in all eligibility areas. Ex – A sixth grade student violating an eligibility rule would become eligible their eighth grade year, if they did not participate in athletics their seventh grade year. They would not have to serve the penalty if they did not participate for a year or longer.

Application of Eligibility Rules

The application of the eligibility rules shall be in effect from the start of the first practice of any school-sponsored activity in the fall until the end of the school year in the spring.

MCS Tobacco/Alcohol/Other Illegal Drug Contract

Athletes are also subject to all consequences of the MCS Tobacco, Alcohol and other Illegal Drug Contract. In that contract, self-referral does not mean “no suspension from a team”.

Electronic Media

No comments or pictures deemed inappropriate may be posted on social networking sites on the Internet and violations can put athletic participation in jeopardy. Cell phones are not to be used in locker rooms.

Phone Policy

For bus trips, phones will be collected at the beginning of the trip and returned before the trip home. Phones will be handed back to athletes on the bus. The head coach can allow phones to be used on the way to an event for team specific purposes.

Athletic Training Rules

School Suspension

Any member of an athletic team who is suspended from school is also automatically suspended from a team, until the administration reinstates that student to school and to the team.

Attendance

All athletic team members (including stats, managers & cheerleaders) must be in class the entire day in order to participate in a scheduled activity that same day (this includes practices). Exceptions are made for medical appointments or family emergencies, which are cleared by the coach, athletic director or principal, prior to missed class time. **Athletes are required to inform coaches when practices must be missed.**

Transportation to Contests

In middle school, a bus is usually used to get to the contest, but participants must arrange their own transportation back from the contest. Coaches of each sport will assist in arranging rides home for all participants. Only students directly involved in the activity may ride school-sponsored transportation. Liability insurance does not cover non-participating students.

Uniforms

No athlete shall be allowed to compete in another sport until all equipment and/or uniforms from a previous activity are returned. Late fines can be levied for late returns. All athletes must wear school issued/owned uniforms when participating in contests.

Closed Practices

Practice sessions are closed to spectators, unless special permission is received from the coach. The practice session is similar to a classroom situation where students are receiving instruction and learning is taking place; therefore visitors are restricted.

Responsibility for School Equipment

Each participant is responsible for any equipment and uniform that they are issued. If it is damaged or lost, the participant is liable for the cost of the replacement or repair. **All uniforms must be washed in cold water and hung up to dry - never in a dryer!** Always hang sweaty uniforms to dry. No athletic uniform may be worn for P.E., classes, work or jobs, socially, practices or to school, except on certain "special" occasions, like Spirit Week or Dress-Up Days. Warm-up jackets can be worn to school on days of practices or contests. Students will provide their own practice uniforms, except for scrimmage shirts in basketball and spiked shoes in cross-country and track.

Student Participation

Physicals

MCS students participating in an interscholastic sport are required to have a yearly physical examination even though MHSA now allows a bi-annual physical as a safety measure for our athletes. The physical is a MHSA requirement and MCS requires written proof of such from the student before

that student is allowed to participate in any practices or games. MHSA issued physical forms must be used and are available on the MCS website.

Head Injuries and Concussions: Duties

Athletic Director or Administrator in Charge of Athletic Duties:

1. **Updating:** Each spring, the athletic director, or the administrator in charge of athletics, shall review any changes that have been made in procedures required for concussion and head injury management or other serious injury by consulting with the MHSA or the MHSA website, U.S.DPHHS and CDCP website. If there are any updated procedures, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.
2. **Identified Sports:** Identified sports include all organized youth athletic activity sponsored by the school.
3. **Training:** All coaches, athletic trainers, and officials, including volunteers shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once each school year by one of the following means:
 - a. Through viewing the MHSA sport specific rules clinic
 - b. Through viewing the MHSA concussion clinic found on the MHSA Sports Medicine page at www.mhsa.org; or by the school inviting the participation of appropriate advocacy groups and appropriate sports governing bodies to facilitate the training requirements.
4. **Parent Information Sheet:** On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be distributed to the student-athlete and the athlete's parents and/or guardian prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition. This information sheet may be incorporated into the parent permission sheet which allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics and should include resources found on the MHSA Sports Medicine page at www.mhsa.org, U.S. DPHHS, and CDCP websites. In 2026, MHSA added sudden cardiac arrest to the concussion information sheet.
5. **Responsibility:** An athletic trainer, coach or official shall immediately remove from play, practice, tryouts, training exercises, preparation for an athletic game, or sport camp a student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury or other serious injury.
6. **Return to Play After Concussion or Head Injury:** In accordance with MHSA Return to Play Rules and Regulations and the Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act, a student athlete who has been removed from play, practice, tryouts, training exercise, preparation for an athletic game, or sport camp may not return until the athlete is cleared by a licensed healthcare professional (registered, licensed, certified or otherwise statutorily recognized health care professional). The health care provider may be a volunteer.

Insurance

The school offers insurance to parents and students who desire it; otherwise it is assumed that parents provide their own insurance. It is a requirement for participation to have proof of insurance.

Code of Conduct Form

A Code of Conduct form must be signed once per school year by the student athlete and the parent. Form available online.

Home School Policy

Middle School – Access to participation in Middle School (5th – 8th grade) athletics will be made available if participation space is available. This may not be determined until practices actually begin and we are able to assess how many full-time students from MCS are participating.

1. Minimum attendance criteria will be based on a home school partner student being enrolled in a minimum of 2 periods of educational instruction per day (total of 10 periods per week)
2. Homeschool students will be accepted on a first come first served basis related to participation taking into account MCS full-time students retain priority placement.
3. The Athletic Director of the school shall make the determination as to if there is additional space available for homeschool students to participate.
 - a. The number of team members that are determined to be a manageable and efficient number is determined by the Athletic Director and coach.
 - b. The determined number is not up for debate.

Parent Permission and Medical Release Form

Students must upload a parent-permit form, before participating. This includes a liability release as well as consent for participation and information regarding inherent risk of sports participation. These forms will be stored on the Dragonfly App and carried with the coach on all trips to insure medical care when the student is away from parents. Forms are available on the MCS website.

Participation Fee

A participation fee is charged to each athlete who participates on an athletic team or cheerleading squad and must be paid before a student is eligible to participate in an activity. The fee is waived through serving in the MCS concessions stand at various events (please see MCS Fundraising for additional information.)

Electronic Media

No comments or pictures deemed inappropriate may be posted on social networking sites on the internet and violations can put athletic participation in jeopardy. Cell phones are not to be used in locker rooms.

Weight Room

Weight Room Objectives

1. To utilize a weight training facility in the best interest of all athletes
2. To provide proficient coaching techniques in strength training
3. To provide alternative programs for achieving sport-specific results
4. To ensure that proper safety measures are being employed during all training sessions
5. To ensure responsibility for the proper care of equipment
6. To attempt to reduce sport-related injuries through well developed conditioning programs

Weight Room Rules

1. Shirt and shoes are required at all times
2. NOBODY in the weight room alone
3. All students must be under the supervision of the coach or staff member assigned to supervision of the weight room.
4. Lifters must work with a partner
5. All weights must be replaced on racks immediately after using
6. Lift correctly. Use lighter weights for correct technique before advancing to heavier weights to prevent injury.
7. Warm-up with proper stretching exercises
8. NO FOOD OR DRINKS, except water in plastic or metal containers.
9. No horseplay!

10. Students not in a sport, using the weight room during non-class hours, must be properly supervised by an approved adult.

Communications and Conflict Resolution Procedure

Concerns or problems within the program should follow the steps outlined below as well as God's Conflict Resolution Principle as stated in Matthew 18:15.

MCS Grievance Procedure Involving Coaching Staff, Players and/or Parents

MCS supports voluntary resolution of conflicts, problems, and concerns between two parties regardless of their positions or roles. MCS firmly believes most issues can be handled quickly and appropriately to everyone's satisfaction. We encourage athletes who are facing difficulties with a supervising coach to deal directly with the coach. If they are not comfortable or lack the confidence to deal with the situation without a parent present, they are encouraged to meet with the coach with the parent present.

Underlying assumptions:

1. Coach's decisions regarding athletic play time-game management-practice time and management are not issues that will not be dealt with beyond a conversation with the coach.
2. Coaches are to provide a safe environment for the athlete.
3. Consistent communication between the coaches and athletes is expected. If this is not happening, this concern should be shared with the coach as soon as possible.
4. Coaches are not to be approached with concerns immediately following an athletic contest. We believe that time and space allows for better communication if difficulties have arisen.

The following grievance process should be followed in situations in which immediate resolution cannot be achieved.

1. The first step is for the player to meet with the coach. If a resolution is not reached, the player and parent would set up a meeting with the coach.
2. After the player/parent and coach have met and assuming a resolution cannot be achieved, the athlete and parents should request a meeting with the coach and the schools designated Athletic Director. The meeting should take place within a reasonable amount of time (10 business days)
3. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved in a meeting outlined in #2, the athlete or parent may request a meeting with the appropriate Principal and Head of School.
4. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved in a meeting with the administration, the athlete or parent may appeal to the Board of Directors. The complaint will be heard at the next available full Board meeting.
5. The decision of the Board will be final.

If any of the following situations occur, an athlete should contact the Athletic Director or administrator immediately and report the event in as much detail as possible:

- Physical or emotional intimidation
- Inappropriate sexual advances
- Physical or verbal abuse

The complaint form is available at the office (#625 in Policy Handbook).

Conflict Resolution

In resolving conflict with coaches, the following steps of communication will be followed by the administration, board, parents and athletes:

1. Player and coach
2. Player & Parent - Coach

3. Player & Parent – Coach & Athletic Director
4. Player & Parent – Coach, Athletic Director & Principal
5. Player & Parent – Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, Head of School & School Board

If there is a concern to discuss with a coach, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Call the coach and set up a face-to-face meeting
2. If the coach cannot be reached, call the athletic director and a meeting will be set up for you.
3. Please give yourself time to understand your concern before approaching a coach. Attempting to confront a coach before, during or immediately after a contest or practice is unacceptable.
4. If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved after meeting with the coach, the athletic director will be involved in the discussion.
5. The athletic director will investigate the concern through discussions with the coach, other coaches, and will observe practice or game situations if it relates to the concern. The athletic director will document the results of the investigation and subsequent action(s) to be taken to resolve the conflict.
6. If the formal complaint is not satisfactorily resolved by the athletic director, the athlete and/or parent may appeal in a face-to-face meeting with the principal, who will meet with the parties involved in a further attempt to resolve the situation.
7. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved at this level, the athlete and/or parent may appeal to the Head of School in a face-to-face meeting.
8. Following this meeting, the conflict may be presented to the School Board in a formal written correspondence.

Awards

No end of season awards are given at the Middle School level of activities.

Coach Observation Process

There is much more to coaching on the interscholastic level than winning. A successful coach needs a broad spectrum of competencies that are, in most situations, not taken into account whenever he/she is evaluated. Not everyone fits the model of the successful coach and the successful coach is not always the one who wins the game.

There is much to be understood if one is to be a capable coach at a Christian school. Coaches need to understand growth and development patterns, strength development, stress factors, fatigue levels, psychological readiness, maturation rates, learning curves, modern training techniques, and proper sequential development of various skills. This list should be much longer, but the important factor to remember is that it takes knowledge and command of many competencies to be a coach. If we were to stop here, however, we would still be missing a very important ingredient in successful coaching. Integrated with all of these necessary factors is a love for the Lord and a willingness to model a close walk with Him. We ask each of our coaches to use athletics as a tool to help our athletes to better understand the sovereignty of God in all of life. Without identification of program goals and objectives, it is difficult to assess the need for growth, improvement or change. The following instruments have been developed to help athletic directors accomplish the goals of coaching assessment and improvement.

Observation Procedures

Purposes

1. To afford an opportunity to identify, recognize and praise quality coaching and instruction.
2. To provide an opportunity to identify potential leadership within a system.
3. To create a climate to achieve individual improvement through the development of job targets.

4. To provide information necessary to enhance objective assessment of a coach.
5. To identify factors that interfere with a coach's overall contribution to the growth of athletes.
6. To assure that quality coaching is a responsibility shared by the entire coaching staff and the athletic administrator.

Procedures

1. Supervision
 - a. The athletic director and principal are responsible for the supervision of all coaches' evaluations.
2. Coaches are encouraged to ask their teams for observation input either formally or informally.
3. Process
 - a. The athletic director will submit a copy of the observation report to the principal and keep a file of that report.

Acknowledgement of Risks

Manhattan Christian will provide properly trained coaches, safe equipment and facilities and make reasonable efforts to see that the extracurricular program is safe for everyone. Nevertheless, because activity can involve injury to the participants, you must be warned of dangers.

The purpose of this warning is to aid you in making an informed decision as to whether to participate in the activity. In addition, its purpose is to make you aware that as a student athlete, parent or guardian, it is your responsibility to learn about the sport and to inquire of coaches, physicians and other knowledgeable persons about any concerns that you might have.

Athletic injuries can impair the participant's general physical and mental health. Such injuries can include death or serious physical injury and a possibility of emotional injury. Injury can arise from the administration of first aid, or failing to follow game training, safety or other team rules. The use of transportation provided to and from a contest also involves the risk of injury or death.

Cross Country

Cross Country is a competitive running sport. Common injuries sustained in cross country are to the knees, legs, hips and lower back. The achilles tendon, shin, ankle, foot, calf muscle and hamstring muscle are also common injury sites. Common causes of injury to runners are training errors, difference in leg lengths, improperly fitted running shoes, or running surfaces. Other possible causes of injury include heat stroke, frostbite or congenital body defects.

Volleyball

Volleyball is a competitive net and power ball sport. Common injuries sustained as a result of participating in volleyball are to the arms, hands, legs, feet, ankles, knees, lower back, shoulders and elbows. Bruises, scrapes, strains, sprains, fractures, ligament and cartilage damage, and concussions are also possible. Injury to the head and mouth, nose, teeth, eyes, ears, and other parts of the body can result from contact with the ball, players, the playing surface, and other solid objects in and around the playing area.

Football

Football is an outdoor game using a ball. Football is a game that involves CONTACT. Because it is a contact sport, football involves the risk of serious injury to every part of the body. Common injuries sustained as a result of participation include ankle, knee, back, head, neck, arms and leg injuries. Bruises, muscle strains, cramps, fractures and dislocations are common types of injuries sustained by

football players. Injuries can result from contact with other participants, the playing surface and other solid objects in and around the football field. Weather conditions can cause colds, flu, hypothermia, heat stroke, frostbite and sunburn.

Basketball

Basketball is a ball and hoop sport involving CONTACT. Because it is a contact sport, basketball involves the risk of serious injury to every part of the body. Common injuries sustained as a result of participating in basketball include ankle, knee, back, neck, head and leg injuries. Bruises, muscle strains, cramps, fractures, and dislocations are common types of injuries sustained by basketball players.

Basketball injuries can result from contact with other participants, the basketball, the laying surface and other solid objects in and around the basketball court.

Track and Field

Track and Field is a sport involving sprinting, running, jumping and activities such as the pole vault, high jump, and discus throw. Common injuries sustained as a result of participating in track and field are to the thigh and hamstring muscles in the back part of the leg. Shin splints, muscle and tendon injuries of the leg and inflammation of the knee are also common. Head and neck injuries can occur as a result of being struck by throwing implements. Arm and shoulder injuries can occur to participants as well. The most common time for injury to occur is during practice or warm-up. Other possible injuries include heat stroke or frostbite.

Golf

Golf is a sport involving the use of a club and a ball. Injuries sustained while participating in golf include back, shoulder, wrist, finger or leg injuries resulting from strained muscles or tendons. Improper warm-up can result in discomfort to the whole body. Also, participants can be involved in injuries from contact with golf balls and clubs used by other participants, while in a practice or meet situation. Weather conditions may also cause colds, flu, heat stroke, sunburn, frostbite, or other respiratory problems.

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