



Athletic Handbook 2023 – 2024

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Athletic Department Handbook

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Introduction

The Maryville Christian School Athletic Handbook is intended to provide specific guidelines concerning the administration and everyday operation of the Maryville Christian School Athletic Department. The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are essential for the successful growth, efficiency, and quality of Maryville Christian School athletics.

1.0 Program Overview

1.1 Mission

The mission of the MCS Athletic Department is to build athletic programs of excellence, grounded in integrity, sportsmanship, and character, with Christ at the center while creating an environment that allows student athletes to develop to their full potential.

1.2 Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the MCS Athletic Department is to honor God with our competitive spirit and our desire to excel. A dynamic athletic program is important to the educational development of students. It raises school spirit and develops school unity. The MCS Athletic Department is an extension of Maryville Christian School. It is our goal to be consistent with the general objectives of the school. We strive to recognize and take advantage of the unique relationship we have with student-athletes as we minister, coach, and lead by Christian example in developing students physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Participation in the MCS Athletic Program carries with it responsibilities to the school and each respective team. The student-athlete, parent, coach, Athletic Director, administration, and staff will work together to promote that participation in the MCS Athletic Program is a privilege and an honor, not a right. The athletic field and court are classrooms where teaching is foremost in the development of character, integrity, sportsmanship, school spirit, and teamwork.

1.3 Goals

1. To make sure all our athletes understand that their identity is not found in their athletic achievements or any achievements outside of their relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. To promote the Biblical definition of winning by doing our best for God's glory and showing His love regardless of the outcome. Humble in Victory, Gracious in Defeat.
3. To involve the student body, parents, and staff in developing school spirit and unity.
4. To maintain a clear Christian testimony through words and actions to opposing teams, officials, and the community.
5. To develop the physical abilities God has given to each individual athlete.
6. To develop competitive and winning programs. Athletes will compete for playing time, and a spot on the team does not guarantee playing time.

2.0 General Program Information

2.1 Programs Offered

A. Elementary

a. Basketball (M/W)

- b. Cross Country (M/W)
 - c. Soccer (CO-ED)
 - d. Volleyball (W)
- B. Middle School**
- a. Baseball (M)
 - b. Basketball (M/W)
 - c. Cross Country (M/W)
 - d. Soccer (CO-ED)
 - e. Tennis (M/W)
 - f. Volleyball (W)
- C. High School**
- a. Baseball (M)
 - b. Basketball (M/W)
 - c. Cheerleading (W)
 - d. Cross Country (M/W)
 - e. Soccer (M/W)
 - f. Softball (W)
 - g. Tennis (M/W)
 - h. Volleyball (W)

**Sports will be offered depending upon student interest.*

2.2 Athletic League Governing Bodies

The athletic teams at MCS are governed by differing governing bodies depending on the level. Our rosters must meet the requirements as mandated by each respective governing body in order to participate in regular season and tournament play.

A. Elementary School

Basketball, Volleyball – Knoxville Independent Schools League
Cross Country – Knoxville Youth Athletics
Soccer – MCS in-house league

B. Middle School

Basketball, Volleyball, and Soccer – Knoxville Independent Schools League
Cross Country – Knoxville Youth Athletics
Tennis – Blount County Tennis League

C. High School

Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, Cheerleading, Tennis, Cross Country, Softball and Baseball – These teams will act independently. These teams will follow TSSAA Calendars and bi-laws.

2.3 Communication

A. Athletic Department Chain of Command

1. Head of School – Oversees the total school program including athletics and extracurricular activities
2. Athletic Director – Administrates and supervises the Athletic Program
3. Assistant Athletic Director – Assists in the administration and supervision of the athletic department.
4. Sports Information Director - Assists in the administration and supervision of the athletic department.
5. Head Coaches – Oversees their specific sport including instructing the team, conducting practices, developing systems of play, etc.
6. Assistant Coaches – Assists the Head Coach with all responsibilities.

*All parties must meet with the level directly above them before contacting a higher level. For example, a head coach should meet with the Athletic Director before contacting the Head of School.

B. Information Updates

The Athletic Department will make every attempt to communicate with parents and students in a timely manner. All questions pertaining to practice and games should be directed to the team coach.

Schedules will change. This is the nature of athletics. Inclement weather, logistical issues with the opposing team, school conflicts, etc. will often change start times or cancel games altogether. The Athletic Director will follow the following protocol when changes are made:

- a. Contact Office
- b. Contact Coaches
- c. Contact Parents
- d. Athletic Social Media Platforms

C. Coaches, Parents, and Team Communication

Coaches are expected to communicate with athletes through some form of communication. The type of communication platform is decided upon at the discretion of the coaching staff.

Coaches will also provide information on how to communicate with the coach and how to address issues or concerns. Please respect the directions laid out by the coach. All communication should be with the coach first before coming to the athletic department.

2.4 Travel

Parents are responsible for transportation arrangements to and from games and practices. The drivers of the vehicles are responsible for safely transporting athletes. Athletes may drive themselves to games if the parents have sent a note to the office stating the time and purpose for leaving. Students are allowed to drive other students provided the parents provide written permission.

For overnight games all adults must fill out a Volunteer Driver form as well as have a background check completed to transport children other than their own. Coaching staff are only allowed to transport student athletes under the following conditions:

- They have a current Volunteer Driver form (see Appendix A and A2), Driver's License, and insurance on record in the MCS Main Office.
- They have **written and dated** permission from the parent/guardian.
- They are not transporting the student alone (another student or adult must be in the vehicle).

Parents must exhaust all efforts to find transportation for their student athlete BEFORE contacting the coach. Coaches that transport students in violation of this policy will have immediate disciplinary action initiated.

A. Guidelines for Early Dismissal

If a team must leave during the school day, only student-athletes and team support such as trainers, statisticians, and managers will be allowed to do so. Spectators will not be allowed to leave school early. The only exception to this policy would be siblings of athletes, who would be allowed to leave with their parents.

The Athletic Director will let the Director of Students and the Director of Academics know in advance when students must be dismissed early. The student-athlete must inform his/her teacher(s) as well that he/she will need to be dismissed early for a game. It is the responsibility of each student-athlete to get assignments from teachers prior to leaving for a game. They are also required to make arrangements for tests or quizzes that will be missed prior to departure.

Games that require athletes to leave school early are noted on their schedules or communicated via email.

2.5 Music

All music played at MCS athletic events will be approved by the Athletic Department.

3.0 Code of Ethics

The Maryville Christian School Athletic Department code of ethics is designed to outline appropriate behavior for all participants and spectators of MCS Athletics. All parties are a representation of the school and must act accordingly.

3.1 Student-Athletes

Athletes represent Maryville Christian School and their behavior, whether during an MCS activity or away from school, will reflect either positively or negatively on the school.

Athletes must:

1. Understand that a commitment to a team is a sacrifice, and will require a dedicated time commitment, loss of schedule flexibility, and increased academic pressures.
2. Understand that their abilities are a gift from God and that they should give their best in practice and competition for His glory.
3. Display a positive and respectful attitude toward coaches, teammates, opponents, fans, and the rules of competition. Do not have a negative attitude towards others.
4. Acknowledge their responsibility to their coach and teammates by following all team rules and working hard in practice and in competition.
5. Respect the coach's authority. Never question a coach's decision in front of the team.
6. Respect game officials and their decisions at all times.
7. Be humble in victory and gracious in defeat while embracing the experiences of competition as opportunities to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ as well as their peers.
8. Be a positive role model in the classroom and maintain academic, conduct and attendance standards.
9. Not use social media to insult teammates, opponents, or the school and its employees. *See social media policy.

3.1 Parents and Spectators

Parents and spectators also represent Maryville Christian School and their behavior, whether during an MCS activity or away from school, will reflect either positively or negatively on the school.

3.2 Coaches and Staff

Coaches must be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence on the life and education of MCS athletes and must provide an experience that develops character, integrity, sportsmanship, school spirit, and teamwork.

The MCS Athletic Department will select coaches who:

1. Have a Christian testimony and are committed to the philosophy of being a spiritual leader for their players.
2. Have knowledge of their respective sport in a way that allows them to teach their playershow to improve and strive for excellence.
3. Agree with and will uphold the mission of MCS and the Athletic Program.
4. Adhere to the MCS Coaches Handbook.

All MCS coaches must:

1. Adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in the MCS Employee Handbook, the MCS Coaches Handbook, and the Athletic Department’s Handbook. If a policy or procedure is violated disciplinary action will be:
 - Written notice of violation will be placed in the employee’s permanent record
 - Second violation: Suspended from duties for two weeks
 - Third violation: Position terminated

3.3 Social Media Policy for Athletes

- A. The MCS Athletic Department will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as, but not limited to:
- Derogatory language or remarks about teammates or coaches; other MCS athletes, students, teachers, or coaches; and athletes, students, coaches, or representatives of other schools.
 - The posting of inappropriate photos or comments that are in contrast with Christiancharacter.
 - The posting of comments or photos that create a danger to the safety of another person or make a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.
 - The posting of pictures without the written consent of the student’s parents.

Any behavior in violation of these guidelines will be disciplined as is seen fit by the MCS Athletic Department and could include but is not limited to the suspension of the athlete’s participation privileges.

4.0 Participation Requirements

4.1 Insurance

All athletes must have a primary health insurance carrier through their parents or must be covered under an ACA compliant alternative (ACA is an insurance plan that is certified by the Health Insurance Marketplace, provides essential health benefits, follows established limits on cost-sharing (like deductibles, copayments, and out-of-pocket maximum amounts), and meets other requirements under the Affordable Care Act). If a family does not have insurance, they will be required to fill out a liability form prior to their student participating in athletics.

As part of MCS athletics, all students are provided with supplemental injury insurance in the event of a sports related injury during practices or games. The sports insurance is provided by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). This insurance is only available as a secondary policy. In the event of a claim, parents shall make it clear to their carrier that this policy is only in effect for claims that are more than the primary coverage.

4.2 Forms

A. Medical Forms - MCS follows TSSAA recommendations and Tennessee state law regarding all required medical forms. Every athlete must be registered and/or updated yearly by a parent or guardian. No student will be allowed to participate in any team activity, whether it is practice or a game, unless all forms are filled out and completed. Once all forms are completed, a student will be placed on the Student Athlete cleared list, and the coach for that team will be notified. Online forms will need to be updated yearly.

- 1. Physicals** - MCS will provide a physical day that is open to all student athletes (including umbrella home school athletes) free of charge. This will happen August 13th. This will ensure that all our athletes will have new physicals completed at the same time. Physicals will last for 12 months and must be renewed for the athlete to participate in athletics at MCS. If a family is unable to make the physical day or choose not to participate, every physical form will be due no later than Monday, August 29th. If the physical form is not turned in by this date, the athlete will not be eligible to participate for the entire school year.
- 2. Consent Form** - This form gives parental consent for a student-athlete to participate in MCS Athletics and acknowledges both the parents' and student-athlete's understanding that such activity involves potential for injury. It also contains all pertinent medical information and gives consent for medical treatment.
- 3. Concussion Form** - This form acknowledges the parents' and student-athlete's understanding of the signs, symptoms, and forms of treatment for concussions.
- 4. Cardiac Arrest Form** - This form acknowledges the parents' and student-athlete's understanding of the signs, symptoms, and forms of treatment for sudden cardiac arrest.
- 5. Medication Form (***) If necessary** - This form is required for any medication that is prescribed to a student-athlete that must be taken while on an overnight trip. The form must be filled out before the trip by a parent or guardian, signed by the physician, and given to the designated school staff member that will handle all medication needs while on the trip.

4.3 Fees and Additional Costs

Registration - All student-athletes and their parents must complete a registration form for each sport acknowledging they have read and understand the MCS Athletic Department policies as outlined in the Athletic Handbook. Students will not be issued their uniform until they have completed the team's registration form and the athletic fee is paid. The form also designates how the athletic fee will be paid. Indicating fees to be charged to a student's FACTS account constitutes as payment. As of the 2023 – 2024 school year, athletic fees include uniform usage and/or purchasing. The fee is non-refundable after a sport's respective registration deadline.

Individual Fees

Elementary School - \$150 (Umbrella Student \$250) per sport

Middle School - \$250 (Umbrella Student \$350) per sport

High School - \$275 (Umbrella Students \$375, Non-Umbrella Student \$450) per sport

Admission Costs

Cost of admission is set by the league in which each team competes. Costs are subject to change.

- Elementary School Sports – \$4 Adults, \$2 Students
- Middle School Sports – \$5 Adults, \$3 Students
- High School Sports – \$6, \$4 Students

Note: MCS students, faculty and staff receive free admission to all home games. All patrons, including 2023 – 2024 pass holders and MCS students, must pay admission to tournament games whether home or away.

Additional Costs - Some sports may require additional costs such as items that are not issued by the athletic department (shoes, cleats, hats, pants, shirts, etc.) as well as additional costs for out-of-town tournaments.

****Should a season be delayed, postponed, or canceled for more than a continuous two-week period due to community-wide and/or global health issues, the Head of School and the Athletic Director may decide to refund and/or credit sports fees for that season pro rata by basing the percentage on the number of practices and games already played in that season.***

5.0 Eligibility and Participation Policies

Privilege to Participate in Extracurricular Activities Policy

Participation in co-curricular or extracurricular activities such as athletics, drama, or club activities is encouraged at MCS. However, participation should never interfere with a student's ability to complete coursework or pass a class. This policy is designed to help coaches, staff, teachers, students, and parents clearly understand when academic checkpoints will take place as well as when the Privilege to Participate will be lost.

5.1 Privilege to Participate Policy

Any single class average of an 'F' or any 2 classes each averaging a 'D' will result in the student's Privilege to Participate in extracurricular activities being lost.

A student's Privilege to Participate will be determined by the dates selected by administration. There are certain dates when the student's Privilege to Participate can be lost and certain dates when it can be regained. It should be noted that a student's grades at the end of one semester will determine that student's eligibility at the beginning of the next semester.

A. Dates Where the Privilege to Participate in Extracurricular Activities can be Lost

- There are 8 academic checkpoints throughout the year at which a student can lose the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities. These dates will be determined by the administration.

B. Dates Where the Privilege to Participate in Extracurricular Activities can be Regained

- There are 12 academic checkpoints throughout the year, at which point a student can regain the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities. These dates will be determined by the administration.

At each checkpoint, the Director of Academics will provide the directors of each extracurricular program (Athletic Director, Drama Director, and Club Directors) with a list of students who have either lost or regained the privilege to participate. Each director will communicate this information directly with the students as well as send an email to the parents and coaches with the academic update.

5.2 Student Conduct Policies

Student athletes will be required to follow the Student/Parent Handbook while at any Maryville ChristianSchool athletic event. Please see the Student/Parent Handbook for more details.

Any student that is serving a suspension of any kind (ISS/OSS) will be ineligible to participate in all team activities during the suspension period.

5.3 Try-outs and Team Selection

Selection of athletic teams is conducted during a designated tryout period. The coach reserves the right to name the players on his/her team whether or not they attend tryouts. If a student is unable to try out due to an emergency situation, they must meet with the coach to discuss a possible alternate tryout date. They must do so before the team roster has been announced.

***** Homeschool and MCS students trying out for an athletic team will be given an equal opportunity for a roster spot regardless of enrollment status.**

Due to the commitment required both academically and athletically, student athletes are only permitted to be involved with one sport per athletic season. Students are encouraged to build relationships and show commitment to their respective teams and this policy is designed to enhance this process.

5.4 Homeschool Eligibility

Homeschool students under the MCS umbrella are allowed to compete in the MCS athletic program. No homeschool student not under the umbrella program are allowed to compete. All homeschool students must adhere to the student conduct and academic policies.

***Homeschool students not under the MCS Umbrella that have been involved with an athletic team will still be allowed to compete and are grandfathered into an exception to this policy.**

5.5 Guidelines for Quitting a Team

If a student-athlete chooses to quit a team, he/she must turn in their uniform within a week after informing the coach of his/her decision. The same guidelines and penalties for turning in a uniform at the end of the season apply here. The athletic fee is not refundable once a player quits a team, and the student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in any other sport within the same season.

6.0 Attendance Policies

6.1 Attendance Policy

Students must be in attendance at least 2 block periods of the school day in order to participate in any extracurricular activities that day. These activities include sport practices/games.

6.2 Excused Absences

Athletes are expected to attend all practices and games unless otherwise excused by the coach. Playing time or travel should not play a role in attendance decisions. Attendance is mandatory. Coaches must be notified at least 24 hours in advance if a practice or game will be missed. It is understood that there may be times where a 24-hour notice is not possible; however, student-athletes and/or parents should make every effort to notify coaches as soon as possible. Please consider that coaches are working on strategy days in advance of a scheduled game. Athletes who do not attend practice disrupt strategy. Homework or other academic pressures are not a reason to miss practice and will be considered unexcused.

6.3 Practices

Coaches are responsible for communicating practice rules and schedules which will include start and end times.

If a practice is scheduled at MCS for later than 3:45 p.m., a student-athlete must be picked up from school and brought back for practice, or he/she must go to after care (up to 8th grade). MCS cannot allow students to be unsupervised after school hours as this is a liability risk for the school.

6.4 Games

Game schedules are distributed early in the season therefore every attempt should be made to avoid scheduling doctor/dental appointments on game days if they will conflict. If an athlete misses a game for an unexcused reason, the athlete will be held out of the next game. Two unexcused absences from games will result in automatic removal from the team. This policy also includes leaving early from games. The head coach must approve in advance any athlete leaving early from a game.

If a game is scheduled at MCS in which the players and coach arrive later than 3:45, a student-athlete must be picked up from school and brought back for the game, or he/she must go to after care up to 8th grade. MCS cannot allow students to be unsupervised after school hours as this is a liability risk for the school.

7.0 Uniforms and Attire

7.1 Uniforms and Team Equipment

- a. **Property of MCS** - Uniforms and equipment are property of MCS, unless otherwise stated. Players are responsible for all uniforms and equipment issued to them. Players must sign the uniform inventory form upon being issued a uniform acknowledging its condition.
- b. **Competition Only** - At no time should uniforms be worn when not in competition, unless allowed by the school administration as in the case of spirit week.
- c. **Returning Uniforms** –Coaches will schedule a uniform return time no later than two weeks after the last competition for the season. All uniforms will be turned in on or before that day to avoid late turn in consequences. All uniforms will be checked by the coach or a team representative to make sure they are in good enough condition to be worn again. Normal wear and tear is expected, but uniforms should be free of stains, tears, or malformation. Players must sign the uniform inventory form acknowledging they have turned in their uniform and that it is in a suitable condition for reuse.
- d. **Penalty for Turning Uniforms in Late** - Uniforms turned in after the end of the season must be handed directly to an athletic department staff member and inspected before the player can sign the uniform inventory form. Uniforms are not to be left outside the Athletic Director's office.

Players will be financially responsible for any uniform pieces that are unwearable or unaccounted for. If a uniform is not turned in by the end of the school year the student- athlete will be charged \$250. Report cards will be withheld until all of a player's uniform pieces have been returned to the Athletic Department or paid for by the player.

7.2 Practice Attire

Practice attire must be modest in appearance. Coaches and staff reserve the right to ask any student-athlete to change his/her attire if they feel it is inappropriate. Male athletes may not play shirts vs. skins. Examples of items that are not acceptable to be worn as the outermost piece of clothing:

- Leggings
- Spandex
- Sports Bras
- Shirts with cutouts on the sides
- Shorts with words or graphics on the backside
- Thin Strapped Racer Back Shirts
- Camisoles (Cami)
- Crop Tops

7.3 Game Day and Travel Attire

It is important that MCS athletes present a neat, attractive, and modest appearance when representing the team outside of practice and competition. All student-athletes are expected to refrain from wearing anything not consistent with the school's Friday dress code, whether playing

or not. Team coaches will establish guidelines for game day dress which will remain within the MCS dress code. All players must adhere to the guidelines set forth by his/her coach.

Recognition of Athletes

8.0 Awards

A. Individual Awards - Awards are given at the season end team activity/function for all grade levels. Head coaches are responsible for selecting the award winners. The following awards are given to players on each team whose season is complete before the end of the school year:

- Most Valuable Player
- Most Improved Player
- Eagle Award

*Coaches are allowed to give additional awards after consulting with the Athletic Department.

B. Department Awards

- Female Athlete of the Year (only juniors and seniors are eligible)
- Male Athlete of the Year (only juniors and seniors are eligible)

Elementary – Certificates are awarded at the season end team activity/function. To receive a certificate an athlete must be on the roster at the end of the season.

Middle School - Certificates are awarded at the season end team activity/function for Most Valuable Player, Most Improved Player, and the Eagle Award.

High School - Plaques are awarded at the season end team activity/function for Most Valuable Player, Most Improved Player, and the Eagle Award.

8.1 End of Season Team Activity/Function

At the end of each season, the coach and team members will decide what activity/function they would like to hold to honor their season and their teammates. During the activity/function, awards and certificates will be given out. It is the responsibility of the parents of the team members to come together in the purchasing of supplies, food, or tickets for these events. It is not the coach's responsibility to be fiscally responsible for these events.

9.0 Fundraising and Donations

9.1 Fundraising

All money generated from fundraising is shared between the MCS Athletic Department and the student-athlete to help offset the cost of his or her athletic fees. The amount that each student-athlete receives differs depending on the fundraiser.

Sponsorship Banners - Banners can be purchased for the gym, the baseball field, and the soccer field. The initial cost for a banner is \$500 and will be displayed for a year.

Banners can be renewed for \$400 each year. A sponsor can purchase a banner for all three locations for an initial cost of \$1,200 and a renewal cost of \$1,000. A student-athlete that obtains a new banner sponsorship receives \$100 towards their athletic fees (one season per banner) for the initial year a banner is sold and \$50 for every renewal year. Students may not solicit banner sales from companies that currently have a banner in the gym.

9.2 Donations

The MCS Athletic Department has many varying needs and desires that would contribute to the experience of our student-athletes that we cannot cover with fundraising and athletic fees. We welcome donations to the program that would aid in making these purchases. For those

wishing to make a donation, please contact the Athletic Director or the Assistant Athletic Director.

10.0 Booster Club

10.1 Membership

The booster club is an **athletic parent-led** organization. It helps raise money, provide manpower, and offers other means of support to further enhance MCS athletics. This is an invaluable and necessary part of the program. Every parent who has a child involved in MCS athletics is a member of the booster club. Membership is also open to any other adult who has a tie to MCS and an interest in supporting MCS athletics. Every family represented in the MCS Athletics Department is expected to play an active role.

10.2 Volunteer Opportunities

A. Game Services

All parents must volunteer to help with the admissions gate and concession stand on a game day during each season that they have an athlete participating. If your family chooses to not volunteer during a season, a fee of \$50 will be added to your FACTS account or billed to your home address for that athletic season.

B. School Spirit

Volunteers need to be creative in increasing turn out for sporting events, especially those held on the MCS campus. They will help organize pep rallies and will coordinate it with the Athletic Director and Band Director (if the Pep band is asked to participate).

C. Facilities and Grounds

Volunteers will work with the Athletic Director and the Maintenance Supervisor to maintain and enhance the athletic facilities and playing fields.