

MERCYHURST PREP ATHLETIC REGULATIONS
For student-athletes and parents
2019-2020
MARKED BY PRIDE AND SPIRIT

Mercyhurst Prep endeavors to provide a QUALITY athletic program for its student-athletes. The objectives of the school and those of athletics coincide. Mercyhurst Prep believes that athletics can play an integral part in the development of characteristics needed by an individual who will make responsible choices, contribute to society, and be a total, well-rounded person.

In order to have a quality program, athletes who voluntarily participate must know their rights and responsibilities. Guidelines have been established by the school with input from coaches and athletes in order to make our teams the best we are capable of becoming.

STUDENT-ATHLETES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH SCHOOL POLICIES REGARDING ACADEMICS AND ATHLETICS AS WELL AS PIAA REGULATIONS.

MERCYHURST PREP SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

All MPS employees, volunteers, student/athletes, and spectators are required to act in accordance with the charism of Mercy, that is, to act with hospitality and concern for the dignity of all persons when attending athletic events.

- Show **RESPECT** to the opposing team and **APPRECIATION** of their talents.
- Support our team positively. **CHEER FOR OUR TEAM, NOT AGAINST THE OPPOSING TEAM.** Refrain from booing or any other negative display.
- Show **RESPECT FOR OFFICIALS AND COACHES** and acceptance of their decisions.
- Show **CONCERN FOR INJURED PLAYERS**, regardless of their team affiliation.
- Be a **GOOD AUDIENCE** for performances by bands, cheerleaders, and other groups. Let them know that they are welcome and that their hard work is appreciated.
- Be **GOOD STEWARDS** of the venue at which the contest is held. Dispose of all waste properly.
- Be **GRACIOUS** regardless of victory or defeat.
- Always represent the **MARK of PRIDE and SPIRIT.**

SPECTATOR GUIDELINES

Student fans and other spectators at any MPS athletic event should:

- Maintain silence during the National Anthem
- Applaud during the introduction of players, coaches, and officials regardless of their affiliation
- Applaud at the end of the contest for performances by all participants
- Treat the competition as a contest, not a war
- Positively support our team
- Wear clothing that, while spirited, is appropriate for a school event. All students must wear shirts.
- Not use disrespectful or derogatory cheers, chants, songs, or gestures
- Not use cheers that antagonize opponents or fans of the opposing team
- Not criticize officials
- Not use profanity, obscene gestures, and/or obscene language while attending contests

- Not attempt to provoke, intimidate, and/or berate coaches, contest officials, student-athletes, and/or other spectators
- Not engage in any behavior that detracts from the contest
- Not throw any object in the stands or on the field
- Not interfere with any contests

Any spectator who evidences poor sportsmanship and/or behavior inconsistent with the MPS mission and sportsmanship policy and guidelines may be removed from a contest venue and may be prohibited from attending future contests. Students in violation may also incur disciplinary consequences.

SPORTSMANSHIP AND UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (from the PIAA By-Laws)

Sportsmanship is a core principle in interscholastic athletics. Actions which are unethical or intended to demean, embarrass, intimidate or injure opposing contestants, teams, spectators and officials are considered unsportsmanlike and will not be tolerated since they are contrary to the purposes of PIAA and convey lessons incompatible with the reason why high school sports exist. While acts of misconduct occurring within the scope of competition are often addressed through sport specific rules, PIAA reserves the right to address any unsportsmanlike conduct and impose supplemental discipline as appropriate under the circumstances. The following conduct, and any conduct of a similar nature may subject actors to any and all remedial measures available to PIAA.

Section 1. Schools and Their Athletic Personnel.

- A.** A school knowingly or recklessly condones or supports unsportsmanlike conduct by its personnel, student-athletes, Teams, and/or supporters.
- B.** Not cancel, schedule or reschedule a Contest to gain a competitive advantage.
- C.** A school knowingly or recklessly recruits students for an athletic purpose.
- D.** A school fails to establish and enforce a code of conduct for student-athletes.
- E.** A school fails or refuses to cooperate with PIAA in investigating a possible violation of the PIAA Constitution, By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, and/or Rules and Regulations.
- F.** A school fails to treat a visiting Team as guests or fails to provide necessary and appropriate security for Contest officials, spectators and visiting Teams at Contests hosted by the school.
- G.** A school cancels, schedules or reschedules a Contest for the purpose of circumventing application, enforcement, and/or the intent of any provision of the Constitution, By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, and/or Rules and Regulations of PIAA.
- H.** A school knowingly or recklessly certifies to the eligibility of a student or fails to conduct an appropriate investigation where there is question as to the student-athlete's eligibility.
- I.** A school knowingly or recklessly engages in conduct intended to increase hostile relations with opposing schools.

Section 2. Student-Athletes.

- A.** A student-athlete engages in conduct intended to injure an opponent or Contest officials.
- B.** A student-athlete uses profanity, obscene gestures, and/or obscene language immediately before, during or immediately following a Contest.
- C.** A student-athlete seeks to provoke opponents, Contest officials, or spectators to engage in improper conduct.
- D.** A student-athlete uses race, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability to bait, intimidate, or denigrate an opponent.

Section 3. Coaches.

- A.** A Coach teaches student-athletes to win through illegitimate means. Striving to win at any cost is distinctly unethical.
- B.** A Coach fails to give opponents full credit when they win.
- C.** A Coach fails to control his/her temper immediately prior to, during, or after a Contest.
- D.** A Coach uses profanity, obscene gestures, and/or obscene language immediately prior to, during, or immediately following a Contest.
- E.** A Coach criticizes Contest Officials through the media or to student-athletes or spectators, rather than through the appropriate review process.
- F.** A Coach promotes unfounded rumors of questionable practices by opponents.
- G.** A Coach fails to maintain control of the Team for which the Coach is responsible.
- H.** A Coach knowingly seeks to embarrass an opponent or Contest officials.
- I.** A Coach uses race, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability to bait, intimidate or denigrate an opponent.

Section 4. Contest Officials.

- A.** A Contest Official fails to have thorough preparation in the current rules and approved officiating techniques of the sport.
- B.** A Contest Official is not physically fit and mentally alert so as to appropriately officiate a Contest.
- C.** A Contest Official fails to have a neat, distinctive, and approved uniform.
- D.** A Contest Official fails to report for duty at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start of a Contest.
- E.** A Contest Official fails to honor all agreements to officiate a Contest.
- F.** A Contest Official fails to control his/her temper in all relations with students, Coaches, member schools, and spectators.
- G.** A Contest Official fails, upon request to make clear any interpretations and announcements.
- H.** Following a Contest officiated, a Contest Official discusses plays or student-athletes of a Team in that Contest with any of their future opponents.

Section 5. Spectators.

- A.** A spectator uses profanity, obscene gestures, and/or obscene language while attending Contests.
- B.** A spectator attempts to provoke, intimidate, and/or berate Coaches, Contest Officials, student-athletes, and/or other spectators.
- C.** A spectator interferes with, or attempts to interfere with, any Contest.
- D.** A spectator uses race, gender, ethnicity, religion or disability to bait, intimidate or denigrate a student, school, Contest Official or other spectators.
- E.** Any spectator who engages in any of the behavior identified herein may be removed from a Contest venue and may be prohibited from attending future Contests.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE MPS ATHLETIC PROGRAM

- To foster an environment in which the students are able to learn to make responsible choices, to develop self-discipline and to recognize their own abilities
- To foster growth in the skills related to citizenship, leadership and decision-making
- To develop the well-rounded individual by encouraging participation in a variety of activities
- To encourage the development of physical fitness and physical skills pertaining to sports as well as the development of emotional control and proper competitive spirit
- To foster good sportsmanship, teamwork and school spirit
- To strive towards playing excellence that produces a competitive spirit and competitive teams

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. Upon trying out for a sport, the student should become familiar with the rules and regulations established by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and the regulations as well as guidelines and requirements of D-10 and Mercyhurst Prep. This information is available through coaches, the athletic department, the Mercyhurst Prep website and the PIAA website.
2. The student must meet all of the age, enrollment, attendance and scholastic requirements as established by the PIAA and Mercyhurst Prep.
3. Student-athletes are discouraged from participating in any other community or parish sports during the season in which they participate at school.
4. If a student quits a team after the team has been selected he/she may not participate on another team during that season. The student will forfeit his/her award. However, if a student does not make a team, he/she may try out for another team with the permission of the athletic director.
5. Students are required to have on file in the athletic office the Parent Consent Form, and it must be properly completed and signed. No student may practice unless this form is on file. Each year requires a new physical exam (PIAA). In addition, a student athlete returning from an injury requiring medical treatment must be recertified by a physician in order to play or practice. MPS offers physicals in June and November.
6. Team members are expected to be at all practices, team meetings, and contests unless excused by the coach. A coach may discipline a player if the absence is unexcused.
7. A student must be in school by 9:30AM to participate in practice or games for that day.
8. A student may participate in multiple sports per season after the student and parents meet with the Athletic Director and both head coaches.
9. A display of unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opponent or an official may result in suspension. An athlete involved in any fighting or similar violent activities during a contest or practice may be suspended for a minimum of one game.
10. Athletes must travel to and from events in transportation provided by the school. The only exceptions are:
 - a. Injury to participant requiring alternate transportation.
 - b. Prior arrangements between parents/guardian and coach for the student to ride home with parent/guardian.
 - c. If other transportation is needed, it will be coordinated through the athletic office. Generally, transportation to and from contests against Erie County opponents will not be provided by the school.
11. After the coach issues equipment, that equipment becomes the responsibility of the athlete. At the end of the season, equipment must be returned on time, intact, and clean on the day required. If the equipment is lost or damaged, the athlete will be charged the cost of replacement items.
12. Letters and awards will be given as specified in the school's awards policy. Awards are given based on participation, attitude and service. Prior to the season, the coach should give each athlete the criteria applicable for his/her particular sport. An outstanding participant may be chosen for each team. At the pre-season meeting coaches should provide to parents specific criteria for awards. Special awards are given to seniors as well as individual champion awards and varsity championships. (See MPS Awards Policy.
13. Athletes are not permitted out of dress code during the school day without approval of the Assistant Principal. The AD will schedule a day of recognition for each team and will confirm proper dress.
14. Athletes represent Mercyhurst Prep, their families, and themselves. They should exercise good judgment in their actions not only during school, during athletic events or at practice, but at all times. The best guideline to follow is COMMON SENSE in all your

actions with proper considerations for yourself, your family, and your school. MPS reserves the right to remove athletes from our program who are not good representatives of the values of our school.

15. Parents are encouraged to review and abide by the MPS Spectator Behavior Policy. It is available through the coaches and on the school website in the student handbook.

MEDICAL CARE AND TREATMENT/RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

1. If an athlete is evaluated by a physician (including primary care physician, physician assistant or referring physician /clinician) for an injury, the athlete must present a written release by the physician for *return to play*. The written release must be issued to the athletic director and/or certified athletic trainer before the athlete may return to the specified sport.
2. If an injured athlete does not participate in practices and/or athletic competition exceeding 4 consecutive days, then the athlete must participate in an organized practice and/or conditioning program (including formal physical therapy and/or completion of sport specific testing), which may be established by the certified athletic trainer, primary care physician, physician assistant or referring physician/clinician before returning to play. The *return to play* status with regard to athletic competition will be at the discretion of the certified athletic trainer and/or team physician following reassessment of the injury and considering level of participation.
3. The certified athletic trainer and/or team physician shall be in communication with the athletic director, head coach and parents/guardian regarding the athlete's condition and progress toward *return to play*. Each athlete's injury will be assessed by the certified athletic trainer and/or team physician on an individual basis, considering factors including type of injury, severity of injury, previous medical history, physician evaluation and recommendation and level of participation prior to assessment for *return to play*.
4. It may be necessary to establish contact with the student-athlete's primary care physician or the referring physician regarding the student-athlete's injury and *return to play* status.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICY

Mercyhurst Prep offers a wide variety of co-curricular activities including interscholastic athletics, student government, performing/visual arts, literary, club, and service organizations. All students are encouraged to participate in these activities in order to round out their education. Certain responsibilities must be met by all students who participate.

A student must pursue an approved schedule which meets the necessary academic requirements of the high school and maintain a good record of high school citizenship, integrity, and attendance. Eligibility to participate on a team or activity may be suspended or revoked for unsuccessful academic progress, repeated infractions of school rules, poor attendance, or behavior/attitude in conflict with school philosophy and mission.

There are six grading periods in a school year: Term 1 until mid-term, Term 1 mid-term until end of term, Term 2 until mid-term, Term 2 mid-term until end of term, Term 3 until mid-term, Term 3 mid-term until end of term. Note: eligibility for the start of the fall term is determined by final grades for yearlong classes and Term 3 electives at the end of the previous school year (as noted in Article X section 5 of the PIAA By-laws).

Eligibility of students enrolled in remediation/credit recovery courses during summer school is re-evaluated after the summer session.

Academic/Activities Probation

A student is generally placed on academic/activities probation if:

- s/he is failing one or more subjects
- her/his attendance is poor
- s/he has repeatedly ignored school rules/policies
- her/his behavior/attitude is in conflict with school philosophy and mission

A student on probation is still eligible to participate in activities provided that s/he meets the following requirements:

- s/he must choose a mentor by the announced deadline in order to write an action plan for academic improvement
- s/he must turn in the completed action plan to her/his guidance counselor by the announced deadline
- s/he must meet weekly with her/his mentor to discuss progress and strategies for improvement
- s/he must show continuing evidence of effort and adherence to her/his action plan
- s/he improves her/his attendance, behavior, or attitude in order to meet school requirements

If a student fails to do the above, s/he may be immediately placed on activities suspension. (See *suspension* below.) Students failing a math class must also meet with the teacher to arrange an appropriate math tutorial schedule.

Continued Probation

A student who has been placed on probation will have that probation lifted at the end of the grading period if:

- s/he is no longer failing
- her/his attendance is good
- s/he exhibits adherence to school rules/policies
- her/his behavior/attitude is consistent with school philosophy and mission

If poor performance is still occurring, the student's probation will be continued for another grading period.

Activities Suspension

A student is generally placed on activities suspension if:

- s/he is failing two yearlong courses, 3 term courses, or three courses that are a combination of yearlong and term courses
- s/he has failed to maintain a 2.0 grade point average for two consecutive terms
- her/his attendance is poor
- s/he has repeatedly ignored school rules/policies
- her/his behavior/attitude is in conflict with school philosophy and mission

A student on suspension is ineligible for participation in sports, clubs, and other co-curricular activities until the end of the grading period. Students wishing to regain eligibility at the four week mark after mid-term/end of term should see the academic dean for the necessary information. In order to continue at Mercyhurst Prep, the student must fulfill the following requirements:

- s/he must choose a mentor in order to write an action plan for academic improvement by the announced deadline
- s/he must turn in the completed action plan to her/his guidance counselor by the announced deadline
- s/he must meet weekly with her/his mentor to discuss progress and strategies for improvement
- s/he must show continuing evidence of effort and adherence to her/his action plan.
- s/he improves her/his attendance, behavior, or attitude in order to meet school requirements

If a student fails to complete all of the above, s/he must meet with the principal to discuss her/his future at MPS.

Continued Suspension

A student placed on suspension will have that suspension lifted at the end of the grading period if:

- s/he is no longer failing more than one course
- her/his grade point average is above a 2.0
- her/his attendance is good
- s/he exhibits adherence to school rules/policies
- her/his behavior/attitude is consistent with school philosophy and mission

A student failing to meet the above requirements will have her/his suspension continued throughout the next grading period. Students failing a math class must also meet related requirements in order to maintain eligibility. Those requirements include meeting with the teacher to arrange and document an appropriate tutorial schedule and adhering to that tutorial schedule.

The above program has been structured in order to offer academic support to our students. It is our intention that, by following the guidelines listed, academic progress will improve and the student will acquire better organizational/study skills and be able to enjoy the benefits offered by co-curricular activities.

ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FAMILIARIZING THEMSELVES WITH SCHOOL POLICIES REGARDING ACADEMICS AND ATHLETICS AS WELL AS PIAA REGULATIONS.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

1. The following rule will apply to athletes AT ALL TIMES DURING THEIR SEASON:
 - a. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, steroids or hallucinogens by an athlete is prohibited. If the violation occurs at school or at any school-sponsored activity the student will be disciplined according to the handbook and Student Assistance Program (SAP) manual. He/she will be **suspended** from athletics until all school requirements resulting from this infraction are completed. Such violations may also result in permanent suspension from participation in their sport.
 - b. If a use or possession of a controlled substance occurs at a time other than in-season and either at school or during a school related function, the athlete will be **suspended** immediately from all athletic activity. The administration will determine appropriate consequences as listed in the student handbook and Student Assistance Program (SAP) manual. Out-of-season violations may also result in permanent suspension from participation in their sport.
 - c. The athletic director, assistant principal or counselor will monitor the plan in all cases of violations. The principal will be informed and have final approval regarding decisions and recommendations.

HARASSMENT/BULLYING POLICY

Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual is a basic precept of Mercyhurst Prep. Each faculty member, staff member, student, or other individual who is in a working relationship with the school is entitled to work or to attend school in an environment free from discriminatory practices including sexual harassment, harassment based on race, creed, color, age, disability, or religion, and any form of bullying. All will be held to standards of conduct which ensure that the school is free from bullying and sexual and other forms of harassment. Students are encouraged to report any complaints or concerns regarding harassment/bullying of any type to their teachers, counselors, or school administrators for investigation and possible disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Any type of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying, and/or threatening language that takes place via text messaging, e-mail, social networking, etc., in or out of school, will be handled according to the policy outlined in student handbook.

Anti- Hazing Policy

Under state law, hazing includes "any action or situation that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization operating under the sanction of or recognized as an organization by an institution". The state of Pennsylvania further defines hazing as "any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be "forced" activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding."

As a Mercy school committed to the concern for the dignity of all persons, we strive to make all members of our community feel safe, comfortable and included. It is the role of the older students to help make new students feel welcome and valued as class members and participants in athletics and other extracurricular activities. At no time is it acceptable to participate in any type of hazing as defined above or other behavior in which individuals or groups are treated as subservient to other individuals or groups or in which certain individuals or groups are made to perform demeaning tasks in order to be accepted by the group. Any such behavior will be treated seriously, and consequences may include Tier 2 or 3 detention, suspension or removal from the athletic team or extracurricular group, expulsion and/or referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution.

MPS IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE SCHOOL AND THE ATHLETE WITH A PROGRAM THAT YOU WILL BE PROUD OF AND ONE THAT WILL BE MEANINGFUL TO YOU. THROUGH YOUR COOPERATION WE HOPE THAT PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS AT MPS REWARDS YOU WITH FRIENDSHIP, ENJOYMENT AND SATISFACTION.

FALL PRACTICES BEGIN ON AUGUST 12, 2019. EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF A MOVE OR A TRANSFER, ATHLETES ARE EXPECTED TO BE PRESENT WITH A COMPLETED PHYSICAL FORM AT THE FIRST PRACTICE.