

4.301 Interscholastic Athletics

Policy

Original Adoption: 03/16/87

Effective Date: 07/10/06

Revision Dates: 11/24/03, 07/10/06

I. PURPOSE

To establish the standards under which students will be allowed to engage in interscholastic athletic activities.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to students in grades 6-12.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Participation in interscholastic athletics as an extracurricular activity provides students with important skills and habits that can assist in character development and academic proficiency. Students learn such important skills and habits as team building, leadership, self-discipline, healthy competition, integrity and physical fitness. School athletic programs must place the highest priority on academic achievement and character development. Memphis City Schools, therefore, requires school athletic personnel to monitor the academic progress of student athletes by encouraging them to complete their school assignments on time, reviewing their academic progress and providing them with academic support, when necessary.

Memphis City Schools considers participation in interscholastic athletics a privilege afforded to students by the district. Therefore, participation in athletics is not protected by due process appeals procedures related to student discipline that are afforded to all students under state law or Board Policy. Students participating in athletics are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior and high ethical standards at all times.

Negative or inappropriate behavior by athletes during the school year, during out-of-school periods and during non-school hours can affect other students' perception of the integrity of an athletic program as well as the public's perception of the ethical standards established by the school for all students. Consequently, student athletes shall be subject to athletic sanctions, up to and including dismissal from participation in interscholastic athletics for negative or inappropriate behavior, at any time during a calendar year. The Superintendent shall develop conduct guidelines for participation in interscholastic athletics. In addition, student athletes whose behavior also violates the Memphis City Schools Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary actions outlined in the Code.

Memphis City Schools believes that administrators, principals, athletic directors and coaches play an important role in helping student athletes maintain high ethical and academic standards. They, therefore, must encourage sportsmanlike conduct and academic excellence in students. They also must follow appropriate policies, rules and regulations established by MCS, the Athletic Policy Determining Committee (which governs the Memphis Interscholastic Athletic Association), the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA) and the National College Athletics Association (NCAA).

Memphis City Schools believes that males and females should have an equal opportunity to participate in athletic activities, including equality of opportunity in sports offerings, in equipment purchases and in educational opportunities.

Memphis City Schools supports the active participation of parents and the community in a school's athletic programs and encourages their assistance in maintaining standards of excellence for athletes and in



promoting sportsmanlike conduct at all sports events. All parents, students, and spectators at a school are expected to support athletic events and student athletes by exhibiting sportsmanlike conduct, including showing respect for other teams before, during and after athletic events.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

A. Memphis City Schools shall adhere to the rules and regulations for student athletes that are adopted by the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association (TSSAA).

B. Memphis City Schools shall adhere to the rules and regulations for student athletes that are adopted by the Memphis Interscholastic Athletic Association. The Memphis Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), governed by the Athletic Policy Determining Committee, is responsible for developing policies, rules and regulations governing the activities of students and coaches and for interpreting this policy, the rules and regulations to this policy, and the rules and regulations of the TSSAA.

C. The Office of the Chief of School Support is responsible for administering this policy.

D. The Division of School Athletics is responsible for monitoring student participation in academic intervention programs at each school.

E. Principals are responsible for overseeing interscholastic activities and scheduling athletic events at their schools and for providing secure and safe environments. Principals are also responsible for enforcing the nondiscrimination mandates of Title IX in accordance with the MCS Title IX Compliance Pamphlet.

Principals are responsible for providing coaches with information on academic intervention programs at their schools. The principal and the coach are responsible for approving academic intervention programs for individual students. The principal and the coach are also responsible for setting attendance guidelines for the intervention program.

F. The principal, school athletic director, and Coordinator of Athletics are responsible for ensuring that student athletes adhere to all ethical and other standards and that student athletes are disciplined for violations of the policy and its administrative rules and regulations.

G. The school athletic director is responsible for ensuring that student athletes and parents receive information on policies and rules and regulations governing participation in sports activities, including the rules and regulations of the NCAA. The athletic director is also responsible for collecting and maintaining all related health service requirements.

H. Coaches are responsible for disseminating information to students on policies and regulations governing their participation in sports activities.

I. Parents are responsible for submitting appropriate medical records and permission forms authorizing their child to participate in an athletic activity.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children maintain sportsmanlike conduct before, during and after athletic events.

J. All student athletes are responsible for maintaining high academic standards and sportsmanlike conduct before, during and after athletic events.

K. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

Legal References:

1. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681et. seq.)

Cross References:

1. 4.603 Promotion, Retention and Student Progress
2. 4.300 Extracurricular Activities
3. MIAA Guide for Student Athletes and Parents
4. NCAA Eligibility Rules and Regulations
5. TSSAA Handbook

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Administrative Rules and Regulations

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Coordination

The Coordinator of Athletics shall coordinate compliance with the Policy on Interscholastic Athletics.

Eligibility

High school students desiring to participate in an athletic activity must earn a passing grade in at least five (5) units for the previous year or the equivalent thereof or earn a passing grade in at least five units during the fall semester to be eligible for the spring semester. Credits earned during the summer program may also be used to determine academic eligibility for the fall semester.

Middle school/junior high school students must have been academically promoted to the next higher grade to be eligible to participate in athletic contests.

All students desiring to participate in an athletic activity must also meet the following criteria each year:

- Submit a signed parent consent form to the school giving the student permission to participate in the athletic activity;
- Submit a signed emergency medical authorization form;
- Provide evidence of coverage under an insurance policy (Each athlete must also be covered under an MIAA-approved secondary insurance plan for each sport.);
- Pass a physical exam prior to trying out and/or participating in the athletic activity;
- Abide by geographic/school assignment requirements (Athletic personnel shall not recruit student athletes to their school.); and
- Abide by the guidelines outlined in this policy and its administrative rules and regulations and by the MIAA and TSSAA.

Students identified for special education for whom an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) has been prepared can participate in an athletic activity according to their IEP. They also must meet the academic requirements of their IEP to be eligible for interscholastic activities.

Supervision

1. At least one full-time MCS coach or other qualified school personnel shall supervise students before, during, and after practice sessions and athletic events. The personnel must remain with the team throughout the practice session or the athletic event and continue supervision until all students have been released to a parent/guardian or a responsible party approved by the parent. School personnel shall also be assigned to supervise the spectators and students from the host school during home games. Police personnel shall also be available, as needed. The visiting school is responsible for the actions of its students and spectators while at athletic events at other schools.

Visiting schools shall assign personnel from their staff to supervise the spectators and students from their school during games.

2. At least one full-time coach or other qualified school personnel from the visiting school shall be assigned to supervise the visiting team during athletic events. The host school shall not compete in the athletic event unless qualified school personnel is present.

3. All MCS coaches must have certification in First Aid/CPR training each year.

4. Coaches must model acceptable behavior and encourage sportsmanlike conduct in students. Allegations of unsportsmanlike conduct by a coach shall be reported to the principal and the Coordinator of Athletics. A coach who violates the MIAA regulations, NCAA regulations, the MCS policy on Staff Conflict of Interest (#5.601), or the recruiting, attendance or academic intervention requirements of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

Orientation, Academic Standing and Attendance

1. Coaches in each sport shall meet with the student and the parent prior to the first competition to disseminate and review the MCS Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes, the MIAA Guide for Student Athletes and Parents, and the NCAA eligibility standards for admission. Documentation that the meeting was held and that recruiting evaluation forms were submitted must be kept on file at the school.

2. Athletic personnel at each school shall review the report card grades of students participating in the designated sport every six weeks. Students are responsible for submitting their grades to the coach each six weeks. Students who make a 6-weeks grade that is less than a C in any core course during the first or subsequent six weeks period must be referred to an academic intervention program at the school to help the student improve his/her grade in the course. Where no formal intervention program exists, alternative academic support may serve as the intervention program. This support may include activities such as school-approved peer tutoring and teachers working with students before, during and after school. A student must remain in the academic intervention program as long as his/her grade is less than a C in any core course. The student can continue participating in the athletic activity while attending the intervention program. A student who improves his/her grade to a C or above in any core course will not be required to continue in the intervention program. For definitional purposes Memphis City Schools classifies the following as core courses:

- Elementary Grade 6 – Reading, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Composition/Grammar/Spelling (students must pass two out of three)
- Grades 6-8 – English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
- Grades 9-12 – English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Wellness

3. A student who fails all or the majority of his/her courses at the end of the fall semester will be ineligible to continue participating in the athletic activity in the second semester.

4. A student qualifying for intervention who refuses to participate in an academic intervention plan shall not be eligible to participate in any athletic activity for the school year.
5. The athletic department, with approval from the principal, may also develop its own academic intervention program.
6. In order to participate in an after school athletic event, students must be in attendance for the majority of the regular school day.
7. Each school is encouraged to support student achievement and success in athletics by identifying and/or developing student support and mentoring initiatives. Coaches are encouraged to work with the professional guidance counselors at their schools to incorporate student support and mentoring initiatives as a regular part of participation in the athletic event. Initiatives may include opportunities for community, parent, and student organizations to mentor students participating in athletic activities and incentives for student athletes to offer mentoring services and serve as role models both in the school and in the community.

RULES OF BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

Memphis City Schools considers participation in interscholastic athletics a privilege afforded to students by the district. Therefore, participation in athletics is not protected by due process appeals procedures related to student discipline that are afforded to all students under state law and Board policy. Students participating in athletics are expected to demonstrate responsible behavior and high ethical standards at all times. Negative or inappropriate behavior by athletes during the school year, during out-of-school periods and during non-school hours can affect other students' perception of the integrity of an athletic program as well as the public's perception of the ethical standards established by the school for all students. The Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes apply to all students participating in interscholastic athletics and apply during the school year (on and off school property) and during the non-school term. These Rules of Behavior are in addition to the rules and regulations outlined in the MIAA Constitution and Bylaws established by the Athletic Policy Determining Committee (APDC), and the MCS Student Code of Conduct, which governs the behavior of all students at the school.

Athletic penalties and sanctions apply to conduct that violates ethical standards and reflects negatively upon the athletic program or the school. The penalties apply to school-related conduct that violates the Student Code of Conduct or that generally falls below the ethical (e.g., other actions prohibited by law) standards of the school or athletic program. The penalties also apply year round to any off campus conduct that has become public through reports in the media; through direct observation by the principal (or assistant principal) or the district's or school's athletic staff; or through reports to the principal or athletic staff by other school personnel, students, parents and members of the public. All alleged violations that are reported to the principal (or assistant principal) or athletic staff shall be investigated by the coach, as the circumstances require. The results of the investigation, as well as the penalty, if any, shall be reported to the student, his parents or guardians, and the athletic director. Upon the recommendation of the coach, the athletic director may authorize a hearing by one of the district's Hearing Officers to determine whether an offense has been committed.

Any negative, unethical, or inappropriate behavior, regardless of the category of offense, may result in the complete revocation of a student's athletic privileges, including suspension from competitions and removal from an athletic team. The following are minimum penalties that must be imposed by a coach. At the discretion of the coach, a more severe penalty may be imposed in each category, except with pending charges.

CATEGORY OF OFFENSES

Category A

Category A Offenses are those that fall beneath the ethical and behavior standards expected and communicated by a coach or athletic staff and are not Category B and C Offenses.

Sample Offenses

1. Violation of team rules. Athletic directors at each school shall prepare written team rules for competitive sports at their school.

2. On-the-field/court infractions and poor sportsmanship
3. Verbal and/or physical abuse directed at spectators, student opponents, parents, coaches, teachers, and other staff; disorderly conduct
4. Generally, violations of Levels 1 & 2 of the MCS Student Code of Conduct
5. Unauthorized or inappropriate use of the internet, computers, or computer software
6. Bullying, intimidation, and sexual, racial, religious or ethnic harassment
7. Gambling
8. Theft (\$500 or less)
9. Fighting (no weapon)
10. Possession/use of tobacco product; distribution of over-the-counter medications (e.g., aspirin, cough medicine) without approval by the school (See Policy on Medical Conditions: Administering Medication to Students, #5145.2)
11. Criminal trespass; trespass using a motor vehicle on commercial property

Minimum Penalties and Sanctions

The coach may determine and impose an appropriate penalty regarding a student's participation in the athletic activity or sport for Category A Offenses. For severe or repeated Category A violations, the coach may suspend a student from an appropriate number of competitions, as determined by the coach and may require community service and/or counseling. However, a student may not be barred from competition for an alleged violation of the MCS Code of Conduct or for a Class A legal charge that has only been filed against a student.

Category B (excludes Category C Offenses)

Most Category B offenses are generally juvenile and/or adult offenses that equate to class A and B misdemeanors under state law.** However, some are felonies or are considered by the district as serious under the Memphis City Schools Student Code of Conduct.

Sample Offenses

1. Hazing/Initiation Ceremonies (Any intentional or reckless act by one student acting alone or with others which is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student, or which induces or coerces a student to endanger such student's mental or physical health or safety.)
2. Possession/use of alcohol
3. Possession/use/sale/distribution of illegal drugs, unauthorized prescription drugs, or performance enhancing substances

4. Possession of prohibited weapons
5. Assault
6. Vandalism; mailbox vandalism, defacement of state property with graffiti
7. Unauthorized use of automobiles and other vehicles
8. Throwing or shooting object at train, bus, motorcycle, watercraft
9. Theft (over \$500)

Minimum Penalties and Sanctions—These minimum sanctions and penalties apply over the course of an athlete’s middle school or high school career.

First Violation: The student-athlete shall be suspended for 25 percent of his/her season. The student-athlete must meet with the school’s counselor for evaluation and recommendation. It is the parent’s option to attend this meeting. The student-athlete is allowed to attend and participate in all scheduled practices during the suspension. He/she shall not be in uniform for competition but may be present.

Second Violation: The student-athlete shall be suspended for 50 percent of his/her season. The student-athlete must have an evaluation and meet with an appropriate counselor. The parent/guardian **MUST** attend this meeting. The student-athlete is allowed to attend and participate in all scheduled practices during the suspension. He/she shall not be in uniform for competition but may be present.

Third Violation: The student-athlete shall be suspended for 75 percent of his/her season. The student-athlete must have an evaluation and meet with an appropriate counselor. The parent/guardian **MUST** attend this meeting. The student-athlete shall not participate in any scheduled practices during suspension and shall not attend competitions as a team representative.

Fourth Violation: The student-athlete shall be suspended for one calendar year. The student-athlete must have an evaluation and meet with an appropriate counselor. The parent/guardian **MUST** attend this meeting. The student-athlete shall not participate in any scheduled practices during suspension and shall not attend competition as a team representative.

Pending Charges

A student-athlete with felony charges pending will be barred from competition until the student has missed a percentage of contests consistent with the level of the violation or until the coach is presented with legal resolution of the charges in favor of the student, whichever is first. A student with a pending misdemeanor charge that does not involve a Category C sex offense shall not be barred from competition. However, a coach has discretion to bar a student from competition if the student has multiple pending misdemeanor charges.

Category C Offenses

Category C Offenses generally include any offense, misconduct, or assault of a sexual nature and juvenile or adult offenses that equate to felonies.

Sample Offenses

1. Misdemeanors that include conduct of a sexual nature, such as indecent exposure or kissing someone without consent
2. Sexual Battery; Aggravated sexual battery
3. First degree murder; Second degree murder
4. Rape; Aggravated rape; Rape of a child
5. Aggravated robbery; Especially aggravated robbery
6. Kidnapping; Aggravated kidnapping; Especially aggravated kidnapping
7. Aggravated assault
8. Felony reckless endangerment

Minimum Penalties and Sanctions

The Academic Superintendent, Coordinator of Athletics, principal, and athletic director will assess the student-athlete's fitness to continue in the athletic program.

MCS Student Code of Conduct

A student who violates the MCS Student Code of Conduct shall be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In addition, the student shall be subject to penalties in accordance with the Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes, if applicable. For students who are suspended or expelled in accordance with the MCS Student Code of Conduct the sanctions listed in Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes will take effect when the student returns to school.

ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

1. Unsportsmanlike conduct is any conduct that reflects poorly on the student, school, district, or athletic team that occurs before, during or after an athletic event. Coaches shall impose sanctions for minor cases of unsportsmanlike conduct. Coaches shall report allegations of major unsportsmanlike conduct by a school's athletic team before, during or after an athletic event to the principal, the MIAA office and the Office of the Chief of School Support. The principal shall investigate the allegations and report to MIAA his/her findings and disciplinary actions. The Office of the Chief of School Support also may conduct independent investigations of major unsportsmanlike conduct.

Any school that is responsible for more than one incident of major unsportsmanlike conduct before, during or after an athletic event within one school year shall go before the Athletic Policy Determining Committee and present a plan of action for prevention of any further instances of unsportsmanlike conduct.

2. Incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as throwing objects at any occupied school bus, school-sponsored vehicle, or MATA bus (when the MATA bus is carrying Memphis City Schools students to/from school or school sponsored activities) must be reported immediately to the Office of Security Services. In the event of emergencies, ambulance, police and/or fire fighters should be called first.

In cases involving the bricking or stoning of school buses transporting students to or from athletic events, the Athletic Investigation Panel will be responsible for conducting internal investigations and recommending appropriate behavior interventions and disciplinary actions consistent with the MCS Student Code of Conduct. The Athletic Investigation Panel will be chaired by the Coordinator of Athletics (or designee), and will include a minimum of two principals from schools serving the same grades as were involved in the incident and a representative of the Office of the Chief of School Support, Security, Transportation, Human Resources, and the Officer in the School program. The panel will meet within five (5) school days of the incident to consider the facts and a corresponding range of disciplinary actions which may be warranted, up to and including:

- a) expulsion of students
- b) termination of employees
- c) athletic sanctions imposed on one or both schools
- d) modifications in the contract of agencies providing transportation or security

These findings and recommended disciplinary actions will be provided to offices designated to enforce related aspects of the policy, namely;

- a) the Office of the Chief of School Support
- b) Human Resources
- c) Security
- d) Transportation
- e) Athletics and/or TSSAA
- f) the Board Attorney

3. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete or parent/guardian to provide the coach and Athletic Director with evidence of that he/she has complied with all penalties and requirements stipulated in the Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes. Failure to meet the suspension, counseling, or community service requirements could lead to the student-athlete's suspension from future participation in the athletic program.
4. Suspension from competition applies to each sport and team of which the student is a member. A student suspended from competition by the coach of a specific team must serve the suspension with that team. If the athlete quits the team before the season is completed, the entire suspension will be served on the next team in which he/she plays. Suspension may carry over to the student-athlete's next sport season if the season ends during suspension. If a suspension period includes a fraction of a contest, all fractions

greater than or equal to 0.5 will be rounded up. Example: 4.75 = 5 games; 7.20 = 7 games. In regular season tournaments, the minimum amount of contests will be counted in the suspension regardless of the number of games played. Example: A double elimination tournament will count as two games; a single elimination tournament will count as one game. If an athlete has not completed his/her suspension before the TSSAA tournament competition begins, then he/she will not be eligible for any part of the tournament. For suspension purposes, the entire TSSAA tournament will count as one regular season contest.

Appeals

Appeals Based on the Rules of Behavior for Student Athletes – Participation in athletics is a privilege and is not protected by due process appeals procedures related to student discipline that are afforded to all students under state law or Board policy. However, parents and/or students may appeal the decision of a coach regarding a category A or B penalty to a panel consisting of the school's principal (or designee), athletic director, the Academic Superintendent and the Coordinator of Athletics. This panel makes the decision on whether an offense has been committed and whether appropriate discipline has been administered. The decision of the panel is final. The MCS Coordinator of Athletics shall develop and communicate to schools written appeal procedures.

There is no appeal for category C offenses.

Appeals Based on the MCS Student Code of Conduct - All current Memphis City Schools due process and appeals procedures remain applicable for violations of the Student Code of Conduct by student athletes.

***TO DETERMINE THE CATEGORY OF AN OFFENSE NOT LISTED ABOVE PLEASE CONTACT THE
POLICY OFFICE AT 901-416-4730.***