

ATHLETIC GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

GENERAL STANDARDS FOR PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Purpose: This athletic factsheet is designed to be useful as a guide to student athletes and parents. The intent is to condense information that is necessary to effectively understand and participate in the athletic program in Allegheny County. **Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right.**

The guide includes a collection of information pertaining to state and county procedures and regulations. Additional references on the administration of interscholastic athletics will be found in the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association Handbook. Copies of these documents are available online at www.MPSSAA.org and www.acpsmd.org.

There may be questions that arise that may not be covered. Remember, this factsheet is only a guide. Only open communications between coaching staff, athletic director, parents, students, and school administrators will ensure an effective athletic program.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Enrollment: Students shall be officially registered as required by Maryland school laws and attending a member MPSSAA school. They may represent only the school in which they are registered and at which it is anticipated they will complete their graduation requirements.

Age: Students who are 19 years or older as of August 31st are ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics for the school year ahead.

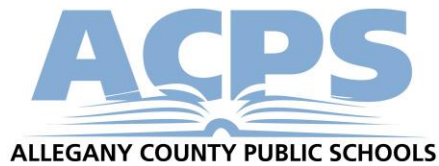
Seasons of Competition: Students may participate in interscholastic athletic contests a maximum of four (4) seasons in any one sport in grades 9-12.

Physical Examination: A student shall be examined and certified as being physically fit to participate in any tryout or practice. A qualified physician within the current calendar year shall perform this examination.

Athletic Insurance and Parental Permission: Every candidate for and participant on an interscholastic team must provide proof of parental permission and have insurance covering possible accident or injury in school-sponsored games, practice sessions and travel to and from athletic contests.

Sports Insurance: ACPS may obtain supplemental insurance to cover injuries that occur which are not covered by the regular Student Accident Insurance policy. This insurance may provide additional coverage for an injured athlete. Claims for reimbursement under this insurance should be filed by the parent through the school office. The Board's insurance office should be advised of all claims filed on this policy. This should be done by completing a school accident form as well as completing the insurance claim forms. This insurance may not guarantee 100% coverage of claims.

Squad Membership: The coach of each sport is responsible for the determination of squad membership. Seniors are not eligible for junior varsity competition in any sport.



Outside Team Membership: The outside participation shall not conflict with the practice or contest schedule of the school, including district, regional and state championship play. A principal may authorize in advance an absence from a school-scheduled practice for competition.

Transfer: A student attending a high school without the benefit of residing within the school's attendance area and/or without special permission of the Office of Pupil Services is subject to disciplinary action, which will result in the loss of athletic eligibility, and other penalties as may seem justified in the particular case.

Recruiting Statement: No coach or school personnel may discuss or otherwise promote transfers or changes in residence or residence arrangements with any student, parent, or other person of influence, or knowingly permit such activity to take place for the purpose of facilitating athletic participation.

Amateur Status: Any student, who has not or is not using his athletic skill as a player for financial gain or has not competed under an assumed name as a player, shall be considered an amateur. Employment as an instructor, counselor, or official may not be considered a violation. Students may not apply for reinstatement until at least 60 days after the date of violation.

ACADEMICS

Academic Eligibility: Student extracurricular activities are an integral part of school life and are used as a means of developing wholesome attitudes and good human relations; as well as knowledge and skills. These activities often require as much careful planning and supervision as student experiences in the academic subject area; however, care must be taken that these activities do not take precedence over subject matter areas, but remain as supplemental activities to the basic courses of study.

While it is desirable that students participate in such activities to the extent that the further their educational development, it is of paramount importance that such participation shall not jeopardize pupils' academic achievement nor exploit their time and talents.

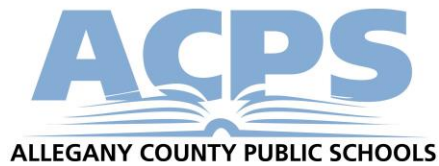
Eligibility for a marking period shall be determined by the student's grades for the most recently completed marking period. Students must achieve a minimum grade point average of 2.0. All new 9th grade students are eligible to participate in the first quarter of the 9th grade.

Grades used to determine eligibility will be those recorded on the report card earned while attending a county school or as a result of transferring from a non-county school. The student will become eligible or ineligible on the day of distribution of report cards.

The student may not practice with the team during the ineligible period.

Eligibility shall be determined by the previous marking period grades except that for the first marking period. Eligibility prior to the first marking period is determined by the fourth nine week's grades of the preceding year.

Eligibility Reinstatement: If a student becomes eligible during a sports season, he or she may try out for a team provided that he or she practices as indicated in ACPS rules and meets all other eligibility criteria (e.g. insurance, passes the physical exam, etc.). No other member of the team may be cut as a result of this regulation.



A reinstated athlete shall not participate in a regular scheduled game/contest until at least seven (7) calendar days following distribution of report cards.

ATTENDANCE

Each athlete is expected to attend school and all classes regularly and on time. Unless there is a lawful absence or tardy, students who are members of any school team/activity should attend all classes on time each day.

CONDUCT OF STUDENT ATHELETES

Student Conduct: Refer to the agreement governing participation in athletics.

Ejection: Students ejected from a scheduled athletic contest by an official of the contest may not participate on the next playing date of that same activity. This includes post-season play of that activity.

Substance Abuse: Alcohol, drug and tobacco use are extremely serious offenses. Not only is the quality of life of the student athlete in jeopardy, but the quality of life of innocent bystanders may be in jeopardy as well. Individuals participating in athletics depend on one another to be mentally and physically prepared to give their best effort each day. This cannot happen if the student athlete is using alcohol, tobacco or drugs that are not prescribed by a physician. Athletes using, possessing or distributing drugs, alcohol or tobacco on school premises or at a school-sponsored event shall be subject to discipline. Discipline may exclude student participation up to as much as the remainder of the season.

Serious Acts by Student Leaders: Students holding leadership positions or representing the school through academics, athletics and/or activities such as a club or organization, who commit an offense classified as a serious, unlawful act in the community or a serious suspendable offense may be removed from the position. Arrest, conviction, or legal judgment is not required.

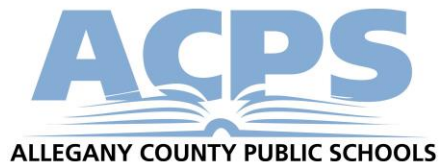
Hazing/Bullying: Hazing/bullying will not be tolerated to any degree and may result in disciplinary action including suspension and expulsion. Any action taken or situation created that causes or is reasonably likely to cause harassment, physical harm, serious mental or emotional harm, extreme embarrassment, ridicule, or loss of dignity to another student for purposes or initiation into a student organization or activity will not be tolerated.

TITLE IX

ACPS supports the provisions of title IX and believes the implementation of the athletic program should reflect equity in funding, scheduling, and access to programs and facilities. The supervisor of athletics in cooperation with the athletic director and building principal will annually evaluate the following areas to ensure equity in athletic programs at all ACPS high schools.

PRACTICE

Starting Dates for Practice: Fall sports, August 12th; Winter sports, November 15th; Spring sports, March 1st. IF the first day of practice falls on a Sunday, practice can begin on the preceding Saturday.



EQUIPMENT

Equipment Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the student athlete to maintain and return all equipment and uniforms issued to them. Parents will be financially responsible for any equipment or uniforms that are lost, stolen or misplaced during the time the student athlete is responsible for them.

AWARDS

The minimum criteria for awarding a school athletic letter or other similar award must include: 1) The participant must complete the season in good standing; 2) The participant must fulfill all team-related obligations; and 3) The coach may establish more specific requirements with the approval of the athletic director and principal.

LIMITS OF PARTICIPATION

A student who participates in both varsity and junior varsity teams may not play in a number of games that exceeds the maximum number allowed in a sport in a week or season for the varsity team. A student may not compete on both a varsity and junior varsity team on the same day.

All-Star Games: Student athletes may participate in the maximum number of all-star games per sport, upon the completion of their eligibility in the sport in which the participation occurs as determined by MPSSAA.

Graduates: Graduates of high schools are not eligible to practice on interscholastic sports teams. However, they may participate in the remaining athletic contests of that sport season. MPSSAA member schools shall practice with or play against only high school teams.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When schools are dismissed early or do not open due to inclement weather, all athletic activities, scheduled games and/or practices are cancelled.

SPORTSMANSHIP

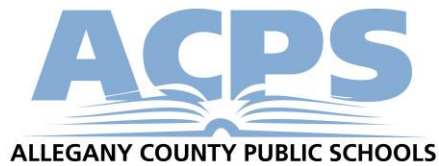
Admission to interscholastic athletic events in Allegheny County entitles spectators to enjoy a competitive exhibition of skills in an education setting. We ask that spectators give student athletes positive encouragement and support. Booing, taunting or intimidating the officials and opponents is unfriendly and unacceptable.

To assure a positive and safe atmosphere, only uniformed cheerleaders will lead cheers. Noisemakers are not permitted and we request that spectators not pound or stomp on bleachers. We encourage support for allowing all athletes the opportunity to compete in a sportsmanlike atmosphere.

CONDUCT OF SPECTATORS

The supervising personnel at an athletic function are required to maintain and enforce appropriate conduct of the spectators.

- Spectators represent their schools, as do athletes.
- Spectators are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of sportsmanship.
- Booing, taunting, yelling profanities, inappropriate cheers or attempts to intimidate athletes, coaching staffs, event personnel, administrators, officials and opponents are unacceptable behaviors.
- Spectators should support and cheer for their teams in a positive manner.



- Spectators who exhibit unacceptable behavior will be asked to leave the contest without reimbursement of game fees and will not be permitted to re-enter that contest. The school principal may impose further disciplinary action.
- Spectators will not be permitted to leave and re-enter without paying a second admission.
- Spectators must comply with the ACPS alcohol, drug and tobacco policies.
- Spectators must stay in the bleachers or stands. For spectator safety, there is no jumping on the bleachers or stands.
- Only authorized coaches for the designated activity and/or authorized school supervisory personnel so designated by the school are permitted on the sidelines.
- School dress code extends to athletic contests.
- During contest, spectators may not play catch or pickup games inside the stadium or gymnasium.
- Noisemakers are prohibited at athletic events.