

2022–23 Parent and Student Handbook

Interscholastic

ATHLETIC PROGRAM



**Howard
County**
Public School System

The Howard County Public School System offers a wide variety of athletic opportunities for high school students. Approximately 6,000 athletic events are held annually involving over 10,000 students. Links to the athletic schedule and forms for all schools are available on the school system's website at www.hcpss.org/athletics.

FALL SEASON 2023 – Begins August 9	WINTER SEASON Begins November 15	SPRING SEASON Begins March 1
Cheerleading Boys Cross Country Girls Cross Country Girls Field Hockey Football Boys Golf Girls Golf Allied Soccer* Boys Soccer Girls Soccer Girls Volleyball	Boys Basketball Girls Basketball Allied Bowling* Cheerleading Boys Indoor Track Girls Indoor Track Wrestling	Baseball Allied Golf* Boys Lacrosse Girls Lacrosse Allied Softball* Girls Softball Boys Tennis Girls Tennis Boys Outdoor Track Girls Outdoor Track Outdoor Wheelchair Track

**Allied sports is approved athletic competition between two or more high schools for students with disabilities and general education students who have never been a member of a junior varsity or varsity interscholastic athletic team.*

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Philosophy of the HCPSS INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM



The Howard County Public School System recognizes the positive role, importance, and value of education-based interscholastic athletics as part of the total educational program. The goals for students who participate in the interscholastic athletic program include:

- Developing feelings of self-worth.
- Learning appropriate behavior when working with others.
- Learning to cooperate in a competitive context.
- Learning to understand and control emotions.
- Developing good health habits.
- Improving physical fitness.
- Learning sports skills.

Additionally, interscholastic athletics provide an opportunity for the entire student body to demonstrate school spirit and positive citizenship.

The philosophy of the Howard County Public School System’s interscholastic athletic program is to foster excellence through educational and competitive experiences in an atmosphere of sportsmanship. The health and well being of our student athletes is our primary consideration and is always more important than the outcome of an athletic contest. We believe winning and losing are important only when considered in the context of how games are played and how students represent themselves and our schools under the pressure of competition. We expect each of our student athletes to conduct themselves with dignity and decorum at all times.

Interscholastic athletic participation is secondary to the student’s academic responsibilities. Practices and games are scheduled to avoid conflict with the academic class schedule, and a balance must be maintained between the demands of a competitive athletic program and the challenging academic schedule that all high school students carry.

In addition to athletic skill development and knowledge of the games and strategies, interscholastic athletics provides enriching and rewarding experiences, which:

- Instill self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Build self-discipline.
- Promote the importance of teamwork and team unity.
- Help students establish goals and work toward their achievement.
- Teach educationally sound sportsmanship practices and fair play.

Interscholastic athletics is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, the team, the community, and the students. Student athletes will conduct themselves in accordance with all the policies, rules and regulations of the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletics Association and the Howard County Public School System as a requisite for participation in any interscholastic athletic program.

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Athletic and Academic **ELIGIBILITY**

Enrollment and Residency

Students must be officially registered and attending a Howard County public school in order to participate in interscholastic athletics. Students may represent only the school in which they are enrolled and attending, and at which it is anticipated they will complete their graduation requirements.

Any student who attends a Howard County public high school must reside within the school's attendance area to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics. Exceptions are granted only in accordance with Board of Education's policy on enrollment, residency, student assignment and admission to pre-K and kindergarten (Policy 9000).

Students who transfer from one Howard County high school to another under the "Open Enrollment" provision are ineligible for participation in interscholastic athletics for a period of one year from the effective date of transfer. Students who transfer due to special circumstances or student reassignment will have their interscholastic athletic eligibility determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Age

Students who are 19 years old or older as of August 31 are ineligible to participate in the interscholastic program. Any student who has been awarded a high school diploma is not eligible to compete.

Academic Requirements

Per Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities, for high school, a full time student earns academic eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities by maintaining a 2.0 grade-point average (GPA), calculated using credit or non-credit courses, with no more than one failing grade for the marking period, which governs eligibility for that activity. This provision does not apply to incoming 9th grade students for fall eligibility. Incomplete grades must be converted to a letter grade to determine eligibility (Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: High School). If a student withdraws from a course, the grades at the time of withdrawal will be used in determining academic eligibility. Weighted grades will be used for academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, including high school athletics.

- Fall academic eligibility for students entering Grades 10, 11, and 12 is determined by the fourth marking period grades from the preceding school year. All incoming ninth graders are academically eligible for the fall quarter.
- Winter eligibility is determined by first quarter grades.
- Spring eligibility is determined by second quarter grades.

Years of Participation

Students in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 may participate in interscholastic athletic contests for a maximum of four seasons in any one sport.



Students who plan to participate must provide the following prior to the first practice for any sport:*

- 1. A completed Athletic Participation Form**
 - Parental permission
 - A medical insurance policy number covering the sport in which the student wishes to participate
- 2. A Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation Form**

All student athletes are required to have an annual physical examination by a physician, dated April 1 or later of the preceding school year, and have the form signed and dated by the physician.

 - The History Form and Athlete with Special Needs: Supplemental History Form are kept by the physician in the student's chart.
 - The parent should return the original and one photocopy to the school.
- 3. Verification of age** - usually a copy of birth certificate
- 4. Seasonal verification that the student is a bona fide resident** of the attendance area of the school (Documents of proof are a current utility bill, excluding a cell phone bill, or a copy of a lease or rental agreement or a copy of a deed of trust). A post office box as the address on the document of proof will not be accepted. For students registered under the Multiple Family Disclosure (MFD) guidelines, proof of residence in accordance with MFD procedures must be on file.
- 5. Signed Concussion Information Sheet and Sports Concussion Testing Program and Release of Information Forms** (provided in back of handbook).
- 6. Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Sheet and Release Form.**

* Online registration is encouraged through the Parent Portal of HCPSS Connect. Downloadable forms may be found at: https://hcpssne.ws/ath_forms

OTHER ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

A student may not try out or be added to the eligibility form after the first play date if he/she was ineligible to try out for the team because of disciplinary reasons.

All-Star Events

By State rule 13A.06.03, individual student athletes may participate in TWO All-Star games per sport, upon the completion of their eligibility in the sport in which this participation occurs.

The Howard County Public School System and its individual high schools will not participate in or endorse the selection of all-star teams. All-star teams are selected by the news media and individual coaches who elect to participate.

Amateur Status

Student athletes lose amateur status by using athletic skill as players for financial gain or by competing under an assumed name. Students shall also lose amateur status in a particular sport if they sign a professional contract in the sport. Students who have ceased to be amateurs in a particular sport may not represent a school in interscholastic athletics in that sport.

Awards

In order to qualify for post-season awards, the student athlete must complete the season in good standing and fulfill all team-related obligations. Each school develops their own policy for achievement and distribution of athletic awards.

Non-School Participation

Students may participate in sports outside of school during the same season as long as the participation does not conflict with their school team's practice, games or post-season tournament.

Transportation

All team members must travel in bonded carriers to and from all athletic events. If approved by the local school principal in advance, a team member may be transported to a contest by the parent or legal guardian or released to the custody of a parent or legal guardian at the conclusion of an away contest. Approval must be in writing and coaches will keep the signed release on file.

RULES OF CONDUCT for Student Athletes

Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is best described as commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. Sportsmanship is characterized by generosity, genuine concern for others and a view of the opponent as a competitor, not an adversary.

All athletes are to abide by a code of ethics, which will earn them the honor and respect that participation and competition in interscholastic athletics affords.

General Behavior

Student athletes must comply with all policies adopted by the Board of Education of Howard County and the HCPSS Code of Conduct. Two policies in particular have consequences for violations that affect extracurricular participation:

Policy 9230 – Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication and Over-the-Counter Products

Depending on the specific violation of the policy, a student may be excluded from extracurricular participation for as little as 10 school days to as much as 11–45 school days to expulsion.

Policy 9270 – Student Assault and/or Battery on Staff

In addition to a substantial suspension from school, a student violating this policy will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the duration of the suspension.

Hazing

In athletic settings, some may view hazing as a harmless rite of initiation or an activity that promotes team bonding. However, it is actually a form of harassment and is a violation of state law and Howard County Board of Education Policy. Hazing will not be tolerated on the field or court, in the locker room, on the bus, or at any other activity where student athletes represent the Howard County Public School System.

Maryland anti-hazing law defines hazing as: "...any situation which recklessly or intentionally subjects a student to the risk of serious bodily injury for the purpose of initiation into a student organization of a school..."

Penalty for violation can result in a \$500 fine and six months in jail.



Board of Education Policy 1060, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation, defines hazing as: "Participation in any intentional or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliation with, or maintenance of membership in any organization." Any behaviors that interfere with or threaten the physical, emotional, mental, or academic well-being of students or employees will be addressed through the application of the appropriate Board policy and the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of hazing include but are not limited to:

- Being yelled, cursed, or sworn at.
- Being publicly embarrassed.
- Having to act as a personal servant to an older group member.
- Being told to eat or forced to eat disgusting things such as cat food, Tabasco sauce, raw eggs.
- Being thrown into or forced into a toilet or a body of water.
- Pressured to be tattooed, body-pierced or shaven.
- Participating in drinking contests.
- Drinking, exercising or taking drugs until you pass out.
- Making prank phone calls or harassing others.
- Destroying or vandalizing property.
- Inflicting pain on oneself or others.

Penalty for violation ranges from suspension to expulsion.

Parent-Coach COMMUNICATION

Congratulations, your child has made the team! Now what?

Accepting a position on a team includes accepting the decisions of the coaching staff. Decisions regarding team membership, which students play, and at times who is removed from the team, are made by the coaching staff in accordance with rubrics, team rules and guidelines. These decisions are approved by the school administration and coaching staff.

As the parent of a student athlete, you have a right to know what expectations are being placed on your child.

The coach should clearly communicate to parents:

- His/her philosophy of coaching.
- Expectations he/she has for your child as well as all the team members.
- Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements, such as special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.
- Procedures that will be followed should your child be injured during practice or a contest.
- Discipline that results in your child losing the privilege of participation.

In return, the coach expects the following communication from parents:

- Concerns be shared directly.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- Specific concerns related to the coach's philosophy and /or expectations.

It is important to understand that there may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wish. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. Appropriate concerns to discuss with the coach include the mental and/or physical treatment of your child, ways to help your child improve, and concerns about your child's behavior or safety.

Topics that are **not** appropriate to discuss with the coach are **playing time, team strategy, play calling and other student athletes.**

It is not appropriate to confront a coach before or after a practice or contest. When situations arise that require a conference between the coach and the parent, the following procedure should be followed:

- Call the high school to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletics and Activities Manager. He/she will coordinate the meeting for you.

If after the conference, you do not feel a satisfactory resolution was reached, contact the Athletics and Activities Manager at your child's school. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined.



Be a fan, not a fanatic!

In order to provide a pleasant, safe environment for all spectators and participants, all those attending interscholastic athletic events are asked to abide by the Board of Education's Civility Policy, to refrain from:

- Intimidating or harassing the players, coaches, officials or fans.
- Using profanity.
- Throwing objects.
- Entering the playing area.
- Loitering in the hallways or on school grounds.

If a spectator of any age is ejected from a contest, he/she must leave the school property and shall have no contact with the officials, players, school personnel, or other spectators. Furthermore, such actions could result in the issue of a trespass letter, Denial of Access, or a ban from future athletic events at all schools. Admission is a privilege, not a license to display rude or offensive behavior.

Care and Prevention of SPORTS INJURIES



Although there are risks involved in athletic participation, there is no reason for parents or students to be apprehensive. HCPSS coaches and athletic trainers place a great deal of emphasis on training and conditioning, injury prevention and management, proper use of equipment, and maintenance of safe playing areas.

Student athletes can take steps to ensure they are physically prepared for practices and games:

- Eat three well-balanced, nutritious meals each day. In between meals, eat healthy snacks that are low in fat and sugar.
- Drink plenty of fluids (preferably water) each day – especially before practices and games.
- Get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
- Warm-up thoroughly before exercising.
- Report all injuries to your coach and the athletic trainer. Never let injuries go untreated.
- Always wear the prescribed uniform, including protective gear, for practices and games.
- Wash your uniform, protective gear and practice clothing after each use to avoid growth of bacteria and staph infections.
- Do not share equipment, uniforms or other clothing, towels or personal items such as razors.

Sports Related Concussions

A concussion is an injury to the brain as a result of a force or jolt applied directly or indirectly to the head. Concussions

can occur in any sport. Parents will be notified on the day of the injury about the known or possible concussion.

If a student athlete exhibits any sign of concussion or reports any symptom, he/she will be removed from practice or play. Athletes who experience any of the signs or symptoms of a concussion after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head should be kept from practice or game play until cleared by an authorized health care provider. After an authorized health care provider has determined initial medical clearance, the athletic trainer will supervise the gradual return to play protocol. The certified athletic trainer will make final determination for full return to play.

Sports Concussion Program Testing

The Howard County Public School System provides a Sports Concussion Program to detect and treat concussions in high school athletes.

As part of the program, student athletes may participate in voluntary pre-concussion baseline testing to assess key functions affected by a concussion. The information is used for comparison after an injury to assess whether the athlete has a concussion and to assist in recovery if the athlete has suffered a concussion.

Before the first practice, the Concussion Information Sheet form and the Sports Concussion Testing Program and Release of Information form must be on file at the school. Baseline testing may be administered on a voluntary basis. It is recommended for students with cognitive limitations.

Universal Immediate Care of Athletic Injuries

The following procedure (R.I.C.E.) will be used in response to injuries incurred during an athletic practice or game.

REST

Do not use the injured body part until pain free activity can be resumed.

ICE

Apply ice directly to the injured area 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off, for the first three hours. After 72 hours, 20 minutes on, 40 minutes off, one time.

Do not use chemical packs directly on facial injuries. Do not apply heat if swelling, inflammation or pain persists.

COMPRESSION

Wrap from below the injured area and toward the body and use a pad under the wrap to add compression forces to retard swelling and activate absorption. When sleeping, loosen the wrap, but do not remove it.

ELEVATION

Elevate to a level above the heart to reduce bleeding and swelling. Every injury that requires the use of this procedure should be evaluated by the athletic trainer, the athlete's family physician or by an orthopedic surgeon as soon as possible. Athletes referred to a doctor by the athletic trainer or coach must present a doctor's note giving permission to return to play or practice.





If snow or ice arrives in the late afternoon or evening, the school administrator on duty will make the final decision.

If a snow emergency plan goes into effect prior to the game or practice, the activity is cancelled. If the plan goes into effect after the start of a game or practice, the event may be completed.

For information regarding the status of athletic events, check the school system's website at www.hcps.org or call 410-313-6666 during the school week. On weekends and holidays, call 410-313-6827 (School Fields/Facilities Hotline).

WEATHER Cancellations

If Howard County public schools are closed for the day or dismissed early due to inclement weather, all games, events and practices are cancelled.

Thunder and Lightning

If thunder and /or lightning can be heard and/or seen, stop activity and seek protective shelter immediately. Thirty minutes should pass after the last sound of thunder and /or lightning prior to resuming play. Spectators are also expected to seek protective shelter.

Heat Acclimatization Period

Heat acclimatization guidelines should take into account an acclimatization period that defines the duration, intensity and number of required practices to acclimatize each individual student-athlete. The duration and intensity for practices are suggested to gradually increase the student-athlete's heat tolerance, enhance their ability to participate safely in warm and hot conditions and minimize their risk for heat related illnesses.

School personnel will monitor heat index readings and apply necessary modifications to practices or games as needed.

Extreme Cold

If there is extreme cold, modifications to outdoor practice will be made through consultation with the Coordinator of Athletics, local AAM, and school staff.

Inclement Weather Conditions

If snow or ice arrives before 2 p.m., a decision to play or cancel will be made by the staff at the Department of Education.

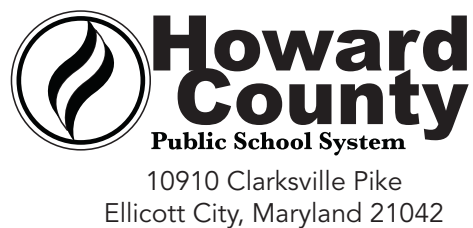
MEDIA COVERAGE of Athletic Events

Local media are notified of all Howard County high school athletic events and frequently attend games and competitions. Student athletes may be videotaped or photographed by the media while participating in practices and/or games.

In addition, the media often feature individual teams and student athletes. Athletic and Activities Managers and coaches may arrange for individual athletes to be interviewed by the media. Athletes should notify their coaches any time they are contacted by a member of the media.

Parents who do not want their student athlete to be interviewed by the media should contact the Athletic and Activities Manager and the coach. Parents may stipulate on the Athletic Participation Form if they do not want their student athlete's photograph used on the school's website, the booster club's website, or in other school system publications.





The Howard County Public School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, immigration status, religion, physical, mental, or educational disability, pregnancy, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status or socioeconomic status in its educational programs; including co-curricular and extracurricular activities, in the workplace or in hiring practices. The Howard County Public School System provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Title IX Coordinator/Equity Assurance Manager, Howard County Public School System, 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042, 410-313-6654. For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/contact-ocr> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.