

Maryland's Largest School District

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*



# Fall Athletics Safety Plan

**2023-2024**

Ensuring safe and spirited athletic and school events is a priority for MCPS. Promoting our R.A.I.S.E. core values and implementing additional supports will continue to be a focus to keep athletic events safe for all participants. Decisions about additional strategies will be made using an equity lens and prioritize safety, while encouraging the positive outcomes and engagement that athletic events bring to our schools and communities.

## Guiding Principles

- » Collaborative communication between school personnel, including athletics specialists, principals, administrators, athletic department staff, security teams, and law enforcement (as available) is critical to the successful implementation of the plan and effective game management. This is especially important when competing against non-MCPS schools, to ensure stakeholders from the visiting school are aware of all game management protocols.
- » The Fall Athletics Safety Plan is written to address fall season events. Additional versions of the plan are available for the winter and spring seasons as well.
- » Fundamental Actions will be implemented for all events.

## Fundamental Actions

The following fundamental actions will be implemented for all events:

- » Schools shall enforce expectations for fan behavior, including [guidelines](#) for respectful and appropriate behavior at MCPS athletic events.
- » [Guidelines](#) for crowd control and end-of-game procedures will be implemented.
- » [Expectations](#) for Elevating the R.A.I.S.E. core values of MCPS Athletics will be enforced.
- » Incidents of hate, discrimination, and/or bias at athletic events will be addressed consistent with MCPS protocols and the [Culturally Responsive Action Plan](#) for MCPS Athletics.
- » Student sections will be limited to designated areas, starting no closer than the second row of bleachers (not on the floor) in gymnasiums.
- » Spectator seating areas shall be designated for each facility, separating opposing fans to the extent possible.
- » Staff members must be positioned to see and hear spectators and respond immediately to inappropriate comments and/or behaviors.
- » MCPS will conduct a Spirited Sportsmanship and Spectator Safety Week at the onset of the season - September 1-8, 2023.
- » Teams must be supervised at all times, including while waiting to play in the second game, or staying to watch the second game. Teams should sit behind team benches, in such instances.
- » Managers must be listed on the team roster and instructed to remain with the team and designated areas.
- » Facilities will be cleared in a timely, strategic fashion, following the conclusion of each game. Areas will be designated for parents/drivers to wait for participating student-athletes (this includes outside areas).
- » Inappropriate and unruly behavior at athletic events may result in suspension from subsequent MCPS athletic activities.
- » Only student-athletes, coaches, game officials, athletic department staff, and credentialed personnel are allowed on team benches, playing floor, dugouts, locker rooms, and designated team areas.
- » Media personnel must stay in designated areas and comply with [MCPS Media Guidelines](#), including securing approval and displaying appropriate credentials.

## TIER 1

### Tier 1 Actions

- » Students of the participating schools will be allowed to attend with a valid ticket and by presenting their student ID or StudentVue verification of their schedule. All other school-aged spectators must be accompanied by an adult chaperone - this includes all elementary and middle school students and high school students from other schools - *adult chaperones must stay and supervise students for the duration of their stay at the game.*
- » Spectators should expect to take additional time to gain entrance to events, as school IDs and enrollment are verified at the entrance.
- » Students and spectators must sit in the stands during the course of the game. While there will be potential gatherings at halftime and postgame, gatherings will not be allowed during the game.
- » Separate entrances, staggered exits, and additional support and security coverage in high traffic areas will be utilized.
- » There is no re-entry to events. Spectators will not be admitted after halftime (halftime of the second game of a doubleheader). Parents of participating student-athletes may be admitted after halftime.
- » Backpacks are not allowed.

## TIER 2

### Tier 2 Actions

- » Only students of the **home** school, with ID or StudentVue schedule, will be allowed to attend, along with the families of student-athletes.
- » Further spectator capacity limitations may be imposed to assist with event management, including limiting the number of attendees to a percentage capacity.
- » Teams and/or individuals who engage in inappropriate behaviors may be excluded from postseason competition or suspended for multiple contests.
- » Game times/dates may be altered to provide more daylight and assist with event management. Games may be moved to the afternoon hours or Saturdays, pending availability of officials, security, and police. Junior varsity and varsity game times may also be swapped.

## TIER 3

### Tier 3 Actions

- » Concession stands may be closed.
- » Only families of student-athletes and participants in the event may attend.
- » Further spectator capacity limitations may be imposed to assist with event management, including limiting the number of attendees to a percentage capacity.
- » In extreme circumstances, no spectators may be allowed.

## Decision Guidelines

Future decisions regarding additional actions, including spectator capacity limitations and game time/date adjustments, will be made using the following criteria:

- » Level of anticipated spectator attendance
- » Historical rivalries between schools
- » Historical occurrence of incidents, including this year and previous years
- » Facility layout, including lighting, spectator seating, and parking lot layout
- » Incidents in the community that may impact school and athletic event operations, which are communicated through a collaborative process with police partners