



General Information for Coaches

2023–2024

Following is general information for MCPS coaches regarding the 2023–2024 school year.

1. Resources for Coaches – coaches shall be familiar with contents in the following resources:

- *MCPS High School Athletics Handbook* (general sections and applicable sport standards section)
- [MPSSAA Handbook](#)
- Applicable [MPSSAA tournament bulletin](#) (with rules modifications)
- Applicable rules book (refer to the 2023–24 rules book)
- [MCPS Athletics web page](#) – [General Coach Information](#); [General Parent Information](#); [Health & Safety](#);
- [Equity Initiatives Unit Resources](#)

2. MCPS Athletics Changes and Initiatives for 2023–2024

Changes for MCPS Athletics:

- The MCPS systemwide Department of Athletics has been [reorganized](#) to include the following positions: Director, Administrative Assistant, Compliance Coordinator, Health and Safety Coordinator, Operations Coordinator, Outreach and Development Coordinator.
- Language regarding an antiracist and culturally responsive athletics program has been added to the Handbook.
- The Athletics Safety Plan guides game and event operations across the MCPS athletics program. The safety plan consists of versions for the fall, winter, and spring seasons, in order to account for factors and logistics specific to each season.
- New out of season guidelines have been implemented across the program, incorporating MPSSAA adjustments to summer engagement and participation in approved MPSSAA/NFHS tournaments and competitions. Specific standards and regulations are available in the document entitled *Out of Season Participation: MPSSAA & MCPS Standards & Regulations Regarding Out of Season Activities Involving School Teams & School Coaches*.
- Baseline concussion testing is no longer required and is optional for student athletes.
- New media guidelines and protocols have been implemented, in order to ensure more efficient game operations.
- Eligibility standards for corollary sports have been modified to increase access for non-diploma bound students with disabilities.
- Student pre-participation physicals are now valid for 13 months, in order to account for insurance requirements for families.

- The sports medicine program has been significantly enhanced, including the addition of full-time certified athletic trainers as MCPS employees in each high school and a partnership with MedStar Health.
- Language regarding the R.A.I.S.E. Champion of the Year Award has been added to the Handbook.
- Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) language has been included in the Handbook. Students must comply with MCPS and MPSSAA guidance and regulations, which are available on the MPSSAA website.
- A systemwide Spirited Sportsmanship and Spectator Safety Week is now conducted during the first week of each season, to further promote the R.A.I.S.E. core values.

Initiatives for MCPS Athletics:

- The primary focus of the 2023-2024 school year will be ***Innovation through Operational Excellence*** across athletic department personnel.
- An analysis of program offerings and stipend job descriptions will be conducted in collaboration with other ECA stakeholders and unions to champion the MCPS Athletics core values of equity and access and support anti-racist efforts across the school district (continuation from 2022-2023).
- A new team application/website platform will be identified and implemented for the 2024-25 school year.
- Principals and athletics specialists will complete training for safety, security, and game administration and management, by completing the *Sport and Special Event Risk Management* course.
- Local school athletics specialists and Department of Athletics professional staff will complete the Leadership Training Course 638: *Creating an Awareness of Diverse Groups within Athletic Programs*, offered by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.
- Enhanced coach preseason meeting formats and structures will be implemented.
- New contracts and agreements with officials' associations will be updated and confirmed.
- A facilities checklist will be established to outline and streamline capital improvement projects in schools to promote equity across the program.
- The sports medicine program, including athletic trainers, will continue to be enhanced while incorporating a partner organization, MedStar Health.
- Additional efforts regarding the promotion of culturally responsive athletics programs in each school will be implemented through the analysis of participation data.
- Gate receipts and admissions prices/protocols will be reviewed.
- The athletics specialist recruitment and selection process will be reviewed and enhanced, in alignment with staffing recommendations from the MCPS Antiracist Audit.

3. Health & Safety

Health and safety expectations for coaches are included on a memorandum titled [MCPS Coach Health and Safety Expectations](#), and on documents located on the MCPS Athletics web page. These are reviewed in the "Health and Safety" portion of the systemwide and local school preseason meetings. Health and safety protocols and procedures are evaluated on an ongoing basis by the Student-Athlete Medical Advisory Committee for MCPS Athletics. Updates for 2023–2024 include full-time athletic trainers and an enhanced sports medicine program, which includes updated expectations regarding the Emergency Action Plan.

4. Coach & Athletic Department Personnel Certification & Compliance

- Coaches and athletic department personnel must maintain required certification and compliance as outlined in the *MCPS High School Athletics Handbook*. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that they meet all certification requirements prior to the start of each season.
- Athletics specialists will submit a *Coach Certification Verification Report* prior to each season.

5. Volunteer Coaches – must complete the following:

- Be hired and approved by the school – must sign contract with principal/athletics specialist
- Be fingerprinted and clear a criminal background check, which is kept on file with Human Resources
- Annually complete the online module: [Preventing and Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- Complete annually the [Volunteer Coach Application and Contract](#) (on the MCPS athletics web page)

6. Schedules / Cancellations / Weather

- For most sports, 2023–2024 is the first year of a 2-year schedule
- Schedules, scores and results posted on County Sports Zone
- No schedule changes unless AD obtains approval of the MCPS Department of Athletics
- Reschedule postponed games on the earliest possible available date
- Review Postponed/Cancelled Events section in *MCPS High School Athletics Handbook*
- Review *Non-School Day Inclement Weather Policy*
- Review Weather and Heat Guidelines in *MCPS High School Athletics Handbook*

7. Sportsmanship

- MCPS Sportsmanship Award Program
- Spirited Sportsmanship & Spectator Safety Week

8. Online Registration for Athletics

The forms required to participate in athletics are completed electronically through online registration. Coaches must ensure that all parents/guardians and student-athletes have completed the registration process PRIOR to participating. Required forms and resources are available on the MCPS Athletics web page, if needed.

9. Electronic Rosters & Eligibility

Expectations for coaches and athletics specialists are included in a memorandum titled *ParentVue Online Registration and Roster Program*.

1. All rosters are completed electronically through Synergy and must be approved by both the coach and athletics specialist.
2. Roster Days:
 - The fall roster day is August 23, 2023.
 - The winter roster day is November 29, 2023.
 - The spring roster day is March 13, 2024.
3. There are many factors that affect eligibility other than academics that must be researched and confirmed, including age, residency, years of participation, etc.

4. [Team Roster Template](#) – coaches are expected to use this form, for consistency

10. Technology Platforms

- GoFan – the digital ticketing platform for MCPS Athletics and the MPSSAA.
- NFHS Network – all stadium and gymnasium events will be broadcasted on the NFHS Network. The NFHS Network is also available to stream other events.
- Video Editing Software – information regarding video editing software for the coming school year is forthcoming, following the procurement process.

11. Protocol for Questions

If coaches have questions or concerns, they should consult their athletics specialist or the appropriate sport director first, depending on the nature of the question/concern. The sport director or athletics specialist will consult appropriate staff in the Department of Athletics, as necessary.

12. Out-of-Area/Overnight Travel

Coaches should see their athletics specialist regarding travel parameters, restrictions, and procedures for trips over 100 miles (one way) from the Carver Educational Services Center (CESC) or all overnight trips.

13. Purchases/Bid List

Coaches should see their athletics specialist regarding purchases and ordering. Equipment must be provided to safely administer each sport and be purchased on an equitable basis, by gender and sport. Coaches and athletics specialists shall ensure that all equipment complies with all safety guidelines, rules, and standards, as established by the NFHS, MPSSAA, NOCSAE, and/or the appropriate governing body for that sport. Coaches are asked to provide feedback regarding items on the MCPS bid list, including the quality of current items on the list as well as potential new items.