



Merit Academy

Athletics/ Activities Handbook

25-26 School Year

Merit: a person's qualities, actions, etc. regarded as indicating what the person deserves to receive.

“character or conduct deserving reward, honor, or esteem.”

The Merit Academy Athletics/Activities philosophy is encompassed in our 5 core virtues: **Valor, Responsibility, Goodness, Friendship** and **Perseverance**.

Student participation in the Merit Academy’s athletics and activities is a privilege. Privileges have responsibilities, a core virtue at Merit Academy. Student participants are representatives for Merit Academy, their respective sports or activities, their family and for themselves. Students are expected to adhere to our 5 core values in the classroom, on the field, in our gymnasiums, and playgrounds, in our halls, in transportation and when they are guests at other schools and competitions. Merit Academy students are expected to adhere to our virtues and code of conduct with this document. As we evolve in our policies so shall this living document.

Philosophy: To promote, facilitate, encourage, guide and form responsible citizens of virtue in our Athletic and Activities.

FEES

Fees for athletics and activities help fund Merit Academy offerings to optimize student experiences in their endeavors.

* Athletics/activities fees apply to all sports and select activities and clubs.

* Fee(s) after tryouts if an athlete makes a team, the appropriate fee will be levied through Infinite Campus (or invoice if student is not in IC) at the end of tryouts.

* Waiver approval shall be obtained from the school secretary/accounting office.

Any unpaid fee remaining at the conclusion of the activity will prevent the student from registering in any further activities.

Student Fees School Of Logic and Rhetoric:

Each sport=\$75.00

Varsity Rifle= \$125.00 per semester

Merit Academy Shooting Sports Club = \$75.00 per semester

REFUND POLICY A 100% refund is available if team cuts or injuries occur (season-ending) before the first game or scrimmage. A 0% refund is available if the participant quits voluntarily at any point during the season or is cut as a result of disciplinary action.

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC ELIGIBILITY

Students must be passing a minimum of 5 courses (equivalent to 2.5 credits) each week in order to be eligible. Weekly ineligibility will impact athletic competition for the preceding week Monday through the following Saturday. Weekly eligibility reports will be pulled at the end of school hours each Friday.

SCHOOL OF LOGIC ELIGIBILITY

Weekly eligibility will be determined on Fridays. If during the competitive season a student's cumulative grade falls to an "F" in one or more classes or to a "D" in 2 or more classes, the participant will be declared ineligible for contests in the upcoming week. No "F's", 1 "D" or better = eligible. Students will still practice with the team during the week of ineligibility.

- It is incumbent on students to not only maintain their eligibility, but to proactively rectify their situation when ineligible. Poor planning and performance on a student's part DOES NOT constitute an emergency on staff's part at any time. Staff will not create extra credit assignments nor extend hard deadlines.

- Students ineligible to participate will be notified on Friday and will have until the following Monday 3:15 to raise their grade to passing. STUDENTS will then notify or arrange for the teacher to notify the Athletic Director on Tuesday morning that they are eligible.
- Mascot eligibility is the same as SOL eligibility.

Behavior Eligibility: Student/Athletes at Merit Academy are subject to team suspensions from competitions and/or cut from teams if they exhibit chronic behaviors that disregard our virtues, are dangerous to other students, or disregard and disrespect the Merit Academy dress code.

TEAM EXCLUSIVITY

Merit Academy is a part of the Western Central League, which is a league that is recognized by CHSAA.

Merit Academy students will play with Merit Academy teams for sports offered by Merit Academy. Sports currently offered are Boys Middle and High School Basketball, Middle and High School Cross Country Boys and Girls, Middle School girls basketball and volleyball and Varsity Rifle Club. If a sport is **not offered** by Merit Academy, our students may participate with other schools. Eligibility and try-out requirements apply for the school for which the athlete is participating.

Exception: If a student athlete at the **varsity level** for individual sports is eligible for postseason meets and is identified as having that ability in a previous season quantifiably, they may try out and compete for another team if that athlete approaches MA first to discuss the situation.

Merit Academy is currently in a 3 year process period with CHSAA (Colorado High School Athletic Association) membership. Once membership is established, Merit Academy will be eligible for postseason play at the varsity level as a CHSAA member.

Examples:

Question: My athlete is a freshman runner and does not have post-season qualifying times. Can she run for another school?

Answer: No. We have a track team that runs in both jv and varsity meets and athletes are able to letter as varsity athletes. While we are not yet CHSAA members, many of the surrounding high schools are. CHSAA is very clear that the intent of the regulations are to prevent transfers or recruiting from one school to another, and to assist schools in growing their program with their own athletes.

*If the runner does have state qualifying times, MA will honor that opportunity and the athlete will be able to run for a local CHSAA member team to be able to participate in state post-season competition.

*If MA does not have enough runners/players to constitute a team, that runner may be able to run for another team if that family initiates a request to MA's athletic department and MA's team "did not make" for the season. Should that MA team have enough runners the following season, and that athlete does not have post-season qualifying times, that runner will be required to run for MA as a MA student.

Question: My athlete is a sophomore who played varsity volleyball as a freshman for another school, as MA did not have a high school varsity volleyball team. Can she still play for the other school's varsity team?

Answer: Yes. Merit Academy does not yet have a varsity volleyball team, so that student will be able to play for another school. However, CHSAA's guidelines note that when a school (MA) has a varsity volleyball team, that student will then need to play for MA.

Possible scenario: If this player is a heavy contributor for the other school's volleyball team and that team is eligible for post-season/State and MA is not yet a CHSAA member but has a varsity volleyball team, that player can petition MA to remain on her varsity state-qualifying team the following year.

Question: My 7th grader wants to try out for another team in basketball and if she does not make it, wants to play for MA. Is this allowed?

Answer: No. MA has a competitive SOL girls basketball team. If the player is a MA student, she will not be allowed to play for another school. While CHSAA does not oversee “middle school” level athletics, the intent of CHSAA’s guideline is still honored by schools across the state, respecting each school’s athletic program, which denies recruiting from school to school and requires students who attend that school to play for that school.

Title IX

Schools and sports teams across the country, including Merit Academy, are bound by Title IX federal law, initially established in 1972. MA follows Title IX rules and regulations.

MULTIPLE SPORTS IN A SINGLE SEASON

To protect the time and academic intensity of Merit Academy, students participating at School of Logic (MS) level may not compete in two school-sponsored sports during the same season. School of Rhetoric (HS) Students participating in athletics and activities that take place during the same season are responsible to discuss, plan, and make proper arrangements with the coaches and sponsors.

TEAM CUTS

All reasonable avenues will be made to avoid the cutting of potential student athletes from Merit Academy Sports and Activities. In certain co-curricular programs, limitations related to facilities, equipment, and manageable numbers may make it necessary to limit the number of participants. Coaches will conduct try-outs assessing student skills and potential to contribute. Students not making the team will receive feedback for growth and future tryout strategies. Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow students new to the school

district to try-out for teams if enrollment falls after the try-out dates. Merit Academy is currently playing in the West Central League. As a result, coaches at all levels will design and field the best team possible. In competition, participants will not be guaranteed equal playing time. However, coaches will continue to work on developing the skills of all participants throughout the entire season.

NON-ATTENDING Merit Academy ATHLETES AND ACTIVITIES PARTICIPANTS Students who are home-based learners, or attend a different school in the surrounding area, and live in WPSD are qualified to try out for Merit Academy athletics/activities. If students make the roster for a Merit Academy team/activity, they must adhere to the academic and athletic/activity guidelines. Students must be selected for participation through the same process as attending students.

TRANSPORTATION

Participants must travel to events/competitions with school transportation when provided by Merit Academy.

Exceptions: 1. Injury or illness to a participant that would require alternate transportation. 2. A formal written request is approved by the Athletic/Activities Director.

Post Game Sign Out: If a parent or guardian wishes to take their child from a contest, they must sign them out immediately after the conclusion of the contest or activity with the coach.

If you wish your child to be released to another parent after an event. Send an email to spekron@merit.academy stating that you authorize this release prior to the event. We cannot release a student athlete into the custody of another parent without your authorization.

Coaches may exercise their prerogative in the following areas:

1. The degree of talking and singing on the way to or from a contest or practice.

2. Consumption of food and drink.
3. The bus or mode of transportation will be clean and maintained at the end of each contest.
4. Team dress code (business casual, school uniforms or sports uniforms)
5. Event release: If a parent or guardian takes their child to and/or from a contest, they must fill out the Athletics/ Activities Release form provided.
6. Telephones on buses or at events: If this is allowed by coaches, only earbuds will be allowed for audio. Upon arrival to venues, all electronics will be stowed and secured by student athletes prior to bus deboarding. At no time is there a guarantee against theft or damage, and it is encouraged that valuables are not taken to competitions or activities.
7. Post game protocols. Students will be encouraged to make calls home as the bus departs from away events, as to have a time frame for parental pickup. We will also use TEAM REACH for updates on arrival times.
8. Parents need to be on campus for after event pickup BEFORE the arrival of transportation. This courtesy is greatly appreciated.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CARE OF EQUIPMENT

The locker rooms are for players and coaches only.

- There shall be no horseplay in locker rooms at any time. Harassing (Hazing) of other students is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- Locker rooms are to be kept clean.
- Each student is responsible for the proper care and safekeeping of the equipment issued. Lockers must be secured before, during, and after practices or competition.

- Uniforms and equipment are the property of the school. Participants must return items at the conclusion of the season directly to the coach. Items are to be returned clean and unaltered (no hemming, stitching, embroidering, etc), if any items are returned dirty or altered, a recovery fee may be added. A deadline for returning uniforms/equipment will be communicated at the last team event.
- Lost items must be paid for through the business office and will be given a receipt.
- Stolen items – a report must be filed immediately with the School Administration on any occurrence of stolen items.
- Lockers must be cleaned out at the end of the season
- No student will be allowed to practice or participate with another activity/athletic program until all equipment and/or uniform obligations are cleared with the athletic department.

PARENT/GUARDIAN/PLAYER MEETINGS

1. The player should first respectfully talk to the coach/sponsor about the concerns for resolution.
2. If the concern is not resolved the player and their parents can meet with the coaches. It is recommended that parents wait 24 hours and refrain from addressing concerns if emotions are elevated.
3. If the concern continues, the player, their parent(s)/guardian(s), and the coaches will then meet with the Principal and/or the Athletic Director to resolve the issue.

REFEREES/OFFICIALS Visiting officials are guests of Merit Academy and Merit Academy expects that school authorities, coaches, players and fans assure officials the respect and courtesy found within our Virtues of Friendship and Goodness. Unsportsmanlike and discourteous treatment of officials by coaches, players, school authorities, or fans of any school community, will warrant warnings and

possible removal from the contest. Merit Academy is authorized to investigate any reports of such conduct and to issue appropriate penalties which may include suspension.

TIME OFF BETWEEN SPORTS - School of Rhetoric (HS) Mandatory: Athletes are allowed a minimum of three (3) school days off of practice or competition when going directly from one sport season to the next. Athletes may choose to immediately participate in the next sport season.

Exception: In post-season play where the play-offs overlap the beginning of another season; the athlete may join the new team immediately, once the play-offs have concluded.

Eligibility Maintenance

1. Have a physical examination every year. 2. Participation fees paid and current. 3. Consent forms signed and turned in.

Participation cannot occur until physicals are complete.

Competing for other Schools in Sports/Activities not offered at Merit Academy: Please read and understand the Handbook for Athletics and Activities at that school.

SCHOOL AND ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participants are expected to be at all practices and competitions. If there is a conflict or an inability to attend a practice or competition, participants will notify the coach as soon as possible. Missed practices may result in loss of playing time and/or starting position.

Vacations during an athletic/activity season are discouraged. However, in the event an absence due to a vacation is unavoidable, a student must;

1. Contact the head coach for eligibility requirements/policies pertinent to that sport.

2. Be willing to assume the consequences related to their status on that team (first chair, starter, second string, etc.).

School Attendance for School of Logic and School of Rhetoric Athletes:

- If ill or absent from school for more than 50% of their enrolled credits, the student will not be allowed to participate in practice or competition that day. Pre-excused absences will be allowed to participate.

Suspended from school or classes-

- Out-of-School: A student cannot participate in any school activity (i.e., practice, competition, banquet, play etc.) until the student has been declared "in good standing" with the Merit Academy. This is established on the next school day following a suspension term. The

Out-of-School suspension is concluded on a Friday. Reason - the student regains "in good standing" status on the next school day.

- In-School: A student cannot participate in practice or competition on any day he/she is serving the suspension term. The student gains the "in good standing" status on the calendar day following the term and therefore may participate. The In-School suspension is assigned as a Friday - Monday term. Reason - the student regains "in good standing" status on the next calendar day following the term.

CONCUSSION/INJURY RELEASE POLICY

If at any time during participation, a healthcare professional removes an athlete from participation because of an illness or injury, the athlete must have a written release from that healthcare professional before participating again. Athletes are not permitted to seek multiple healthcare professionals for a release note. Athletes must turn this in to the head coach before participation will be allowed. In the event of a suspected head injury or concussion, the student-athlete will be evaluated by the School Nurse and/or the Athletic Trainer. If a concussion is diagnosed, the Nurse/ Athletic Trainer will follow the state

protocols for a safe return to sport. A doctor's note releasing the athlete back to activity will authorize the Nurse/Athletic Trainer to begin the Concussion Return to Play Protocol. At no time will an athlete be allowed to participate without completing the steps of this protocol.

VARSIITY LETTERING

The requirements for earning a varsity "MA" letter for the different athletic teams are as follows:

ALL SPORTS 1. A student in any school sponsored program is eligible for a varsity letter if they meet any one of the following criteria: a. An athlete can earn a letter at the discretion of the head coach even if established criteria is not met, depending on the athlete's commitment and contribution made to the total program and with approval from the Athletic Director. An athlete must play in varsity competition to be considered for a letter. b. All athletes must finish the season in good standing to be eligible for a varsity letter. c. A manager/statistician may be awarded a letter after three (3) years of satisfactory service. d. A senior player who has participated in the program for three (3) years, has shown dedication to the program, and has made a contribution to the program, or upon the head coach's recommendation.

BASKETBALL 1. A player who has participated in one half of the total varsity quarters in the season (exhibition and section games).

CROSS COUNTRY 1. Cross Country letter requirements are based on both attendance & performance. A total of 22 points are needed to letter based on the table below:

Practice - 1 point will be awarded for each week of attendance (11 weeks)

Scrimmages - 1 point will be awarded for the scrimmage run 1

Invitationals,, and

Meets - 1 point for each 4 **PERFORMANCE POSSIBLE POINTS**

DualMeets – 1 point will be awarded each time the athlete places in the top

12

Invitationals – 1 point will be awarded each time the athlete places in the top 30

County – 3 points will be awarded if the athlete places in the top 30.

WCL – 3 points will be awarded if the athlete places in the top 30. 3

PR – 1 point will be awarded if athlete improves their time 3 times during the season

RIFLE Based on selection, commitment and competitions by the head coach.

ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY SUSPENSIONS

The head coach, coach in charge, athletic/activities director, assistant principal, dean, or building principal have the responsibility individually and/or collectively to decide whether a formal suspension (in or out of season) shall be used. The formal suspension policy will be as follows and applied to any participant's school career; starting with the first day of formal participation through graduation, including summers and other school breaks. According to CHSAA if a student athlete is disqualified from a contest or tournament for committing an unsportsmanlike act, they shall be disqualified for the remainder of that contest or tournament. In addition, participants disqualified shall be ineligible for the next game or contest as well.

- Substance Abuse: Use, distribution, or possession of tobacco (any form), alcoholic beverages, drugs (including Steroids), narcotics, or hallucinating agents or other controlled substances is prohibited. A violation can be self-reported, coach/faculty reported, police report or parent report of their own child.
- Attendance at functions deemed to include the consumption of any of these substances by minors will be constituted as a violation and will lead to disciplinary action.
- "Hazing" will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Hazing means any intentional, knowing or reckless act directed against another

student causing mild embarrassment to endangering lives. If a problem exists, students must notify the coach, athletic director or principal immediately. Per CHSAA bylaws: prohibit bullying, hazing, intimidation, and threats. Hazing includes, but is not limited to humiliation tactics, forced social isolation, verbal or emotional abuse, forced or excessive consumption of liquids or foods, or any activity that requires a student to engage in illegal activity. By signing this form, I affirm my responsibility to prevent and also to report hazing to a sponsor, teacher, counselor, academic advisor, coach, or administrator. I also understand that any violation can result in school or team consequences that could include dismissal from the team or further disciplinary action.

- Criminal/Civil Law infractions including but not limited to theft, burglary, vandalism and assault, will not be tolerated by any member of the team. The coach and Athletics/Activities Director will deal with violators.
- Severe language or confrontational actions against officials could result in school action administered by the school administrator that could jeopardize any future eligibility, in that, the participant may be disqualified from that game and/or the next contest in that sports season.
- Additional rules and regulations will be given, in writing, to the athlete's parents and activities director before the season begins.

1st Violation= loss of 30% of season

2nd violation= 12 month suspension with an appeal available after 6 months

3rd violation=Permanent suspension with appeal after 12 months.

Fighting in interscholastic competitions

Fighting in any contest shall be construed to consist of:

- An invitation to fight
- Closely following an opponent during a disturbance and making any taunting gestures or sounds
- Punching or slugging with fists whether or not a punch is landed

- Wrestling or tackling an opponent outside a legal play situation.

Violation of this rule shall bring an automatic suspension for the remainder of that contest plus suspension from the next scheduled event. The same suspension applies to any member of the participating squad who leaves the designated team area during a fight. A second violation by the same participant during the same season brings automatic expulsion from that program for the remainder of the season plus suspension from any and all tournament contests of that same season. Should the original violation of this rule occur during the final contest of the season, the participant would be suspended from any and all tournament contests of that season as well as the remainder of that contest. If tournament contests are not a consideration, the participant will be suspended from the first contest in the next season in which he/she participates.

Appeals

Suspensions may be appealed in the following order: Coach, Athletic/Activities Director, Dean, Headmaster, Board of Education.

During the appeal procedure, the suspension shall remain in effect until otherwise directed. All students will have the right of due process. Activities Board Of Control ●1 faculty member – one being a coach not in that sport
1 Dean of school ● Athletic Director