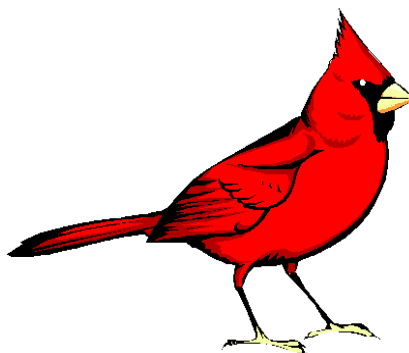


Mason County Eastern Schools

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

HANDBOOK

2025-2026



SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Mason County Eastern Schools believe that **all** students can learn. Students will reach their full potential in an environment of **Teamwork**, **Trust**, and **Pride**.

Athletic Director: Austin Boundy
aboundy@mcschools.com
(231) 757-3733

Superintendent: Paul Shoup
pshou@mcschools.com
(231) 757-3733

Athletic Secretary: Trisha Knizacky
tknizacky@mcschools.com
(231) 757-3733

K-12 Principal: Mark Forner
mforner@mcschools.com
(231) 757-3533

Revised: July 2024

**PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S AND STUDENT'S
RISK ACKNOWLEDGMENT
AND
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE CONTRACT**

Athlete's/Student's Name: _____

Athlete's Student's Date of Birth: _____

Parent/Guardian Names: _____

My/our son/daughter wants to participate in athletics at Mason County Eastern Schools for the 2025-26 school year. I/we realize that there are risks involved in the participation of these sports and that risks to my/our child include a full range of injuries, from the minor to the severe, as well as death, paralysis, or other serious or permanent disability. I/we agree to accept this risk as a condition of my/our child's participation.

I/we have also read and understand the Mason County Eastern Schools' student and athletic handbooks and acknowledge my son/daughter is physically fit to participate in athletics at Mason County Eastern Schools.

Date: _____

Athlete's/Student's Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Relationship: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Relationship: _____

Handbooks are published on the Mason County Eastern website. Printed copies are available upon request.

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ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

We at Mason County Eastern Schools believe that all children can learn. Children learn when provided with a supportive, caring environment that develops self-esteem, self-motivation, and a sense of responsibility. We strive to provide every opportunity for maximum student achievement and to recognize and stimulate special talents in all students. Our major goal is to prepare students to become responsible citizens and to take their places as viable members of the community. The educational environment and the teaching strategies are designed to meet the goals and objective of a strong curriculum. We feel that education is a cooperative effort between community and school.

Student Code of Conduct

It is the collective responsibility of MCE Administration, teachers, staff, parents and students to maintain an orderly learning and athletic environment. At times, when negative student-athlete conduct arises and disrupts the learning and competitive environment, it will be the responsibility of administration to take corrective actions.

MCE Administration will use this handbook as a guide when corrective action decisions are warranted. That said, public school is a people-oriented business. Decisions related to student discipline are often context-specific and do not lend themselves to easy descriptions in a student handbook.

Administrators are responsible for making decisions based upon staff discretion, applicable board policies and state/federal law and regulations designed to serve the school's best interest. School officials will take into consideration the interests of students, parents, coaches and teammates and strive to balance those interests, when such decisions must be made. As such, MCE Administration reserves the right to deviate from this handbook in order to take actions that support and seek to maintain a positive learning environment.

Athletics and Team Culture

Athletics are an integral part of our educational program, therefore, it should be understood that athletics exist to give each student the opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential in an environment that strives for excellence. Like our classroom curriculum, the athletic curriculum is built on a foundation of strong fundamentals and is developmental in nature.

With this overriding philosophy, it is therefore appropriate that the head coach of each sport, under the direction of the athletic director, is responsible for the direction, the fundamentals, the type of play, and the overseeing of his/her sport.

In the middle school grades, the fundamentals identified by the head coach will be taught. A winning and competitive attitude will be encouraged. All eligible athletes will participate in all games.

In high school, teams will refine and improve the fundamentals of the game as well as practice advanced skills of the game. Coaches of high school sports will use their best judgment in the allocation of playing time to the team members.

A. General Philosophy of Athletics.

1. To allow Mason County Eastern students the opportunity to experience the benefits of

interscholastic athletics.

2. Mason County Eastern programs will be conducted within the framework of rules, regulations, and good sportsmanship.
 3. To encourage and expect Mason County Eastern athletes to conduct themselves in a manner complimentary to their school, family, and community in all aspects of interscholastic athletics.
 4. Participation will be determined by skills, attendance at practice, effort and eligibility.
- B. Philosophy for the middle school athletic programs is one of development in following areas.
1. Athletic skills.
 2. Learning to practice and play with 100% effort and intensity.
 3. Concept of team membership in place of individual interests.
 4. Realizing that team membership means meeting eligibility requirements.
 5. Learning to compete with others.
 6. Realizing that team membership is a privilege.
 7. Middle school student athletes will be limited to five (5) days of games and practices per week, with the recommendation of no more than four (4) school nights per week.
- C. Philosophy for junior varsity athletic programs is to prepare players for varsity level competition and involves the following areas.
1. Continued skill development.
 2. Developing winning attitude.
 3. Developing teamwork in place of personal interests.
 4. Learning to understand and accept role on the team.
- D. **Philosophy of varsity level teams in all sports is playing to potential, in order to be as competitive as possible. Participation of all individuals is secondary to competing to win. Team rosters will be determined by the coach.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Participation in athletics is a privilege and should be considered secondary to a students' education. The inability to attend school regularly may result in loss of this privilege.

A student-athlete must be present in school for a full day of school to participate in that day's activities (i.e. practice, games, meets, etc.) A student who has an unexcused absence for any hour will not participate.

If a student is absent the day before weekend competition, the student will be ineligible to participate in the event over the weekend. School administration may grant exceptions (doctor's appointments, family emergencies, etc.)

Excused absences for illness will require a doctor's note. The Athletic Director may excuse absences after a conversation with a parent/guardian has occurred.

Chronic absences (excused or unexcused) will be handled by the Athletic Director and may result in dismissal from a team if necessary.

If the absence is inadvertently overlooked and the student-athlete participates in a contest, s/he must miss the next scheduled contest.

AWARDS

1. Senior Male and Female Athlete Awards

A male/female student athlete must be enrolled at Mason County Eastern Schools for one year and needs to have completed at least two (2) sport seasons.

If enrolled at Mason County Eastern Schools for two (2) years, a male/female student athlete needs to have completed at least four (4) sport seasons.

If enrolled at Mason County Eastern Schools for three (3) years, a male/female athlete needs to have completed at least six sport seasons.

If enrolled at Mason County Eastern Schools for four (4) years, a male/female student athlete needs to have completed at least eight sport seasons.

A male/female student athlete must fill out an application for the award. The application is available from the Athletic Director.

2. Joie Giammalva Student Christian Athlete Award

A male/female student athlete must be an athlete who has earned a varsity letter in at least one (1) sport.

A male/female student athlete must have a good Christian attitude and show that attitude by being involved in school and community activities.

A male/female student athlete must be a senior at Mason County Eastern Schools and be nominated by the senior class. (Two to four students can be nominated.) The Joie Giammalva Student Christian Athlete Award Committee (comprised of the Superintendent of Schools, High School Principal, Athletic Director, Elementary Principal, High School Counselor, Varsity Club Advisor, Varsity Club President, High School Student Advisor, High School Mayor, Giammalva Family Representative) will vote for one of the nominated student athletes. The selected student athlete must receive a majority of the committee votes, and, in case of a tie, more than one award may be given.

3. Athletic Director's Dedication Award

A twelfth grade male/female athlete(s) will be chosen by the athletic director for this award. The athlete(s) must have competed on athletic teams for four (4) years. The athlete(s) must be a great team player showing sacrifice and dedication to the team. The athlete(s) will be presented this award at the spring sports awards program.

4. MCE Athletic Boosters Scholarship Award

This scholarship award is given to two twelfth grade athletes who have earned a MCE varsity letter and have participated in a sport during the twelfth grade. This award may be presented at the spring sports award program.

5. Stickney Softball Scholarship Award

This scholarship award is presented to a twelfth grade athlete, in good standing, who has

Participated in varsity softball for two (2) years. The Stickney Family will present this award at the spring sports award program.

6. Scott Baker Baseball Award

This scholarship award is given to a twelfth grade student, in good standing, who has been an active participant in baseball, earned a MCE varsity letter and is dedicated to baseball first. This athlete must have displayed good sportsmanship, high moral character and citizenship. This athlete must also have followed the MCE Athletic Code of Conduct, gone the “extra mile”, and have the love for the game of baseball. The award committee (Scott Baker Family, High School Principal, Athletic Director, and Baseball Coaches) will choose the recipient of this award from the athletes who have been nominated and who meets all the above requirements. This award may be presented at the spring sports award program.

COMMUNICATION - The “24-Hour Rule”

At times, there are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other’s position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

If you have a concern, you should first discuss the issue with your student-athlete. You may find through this communication an answer, resolution or understanding of the situation before contacting others.

If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, you should do the following:

- 1) Give yourself “24 hours” from the time of your initial question/concern, in order to clarify your own thinking regarding the matter.
- 2) Call to set up a time to meet with the coach after the 24 hour time period has passed.
- 3) If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director and the meeting will be scheduled.

Attempting to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice is not an ideal time. The period immediately after a contest or competition is often an emotional time for coaches, athletes and parents. Meetings right after contests do not promote resolution. If a successful resolution is not reached, the following is the proper sequence in order

If a successful resolution has not been achieved after meeting with the coach, here is the sequence a parent/guardian should pursue in order to share their concerns:

1. Coach
2. Head Coach
3. Athletic Director
4. Principal
5. Superintendent
6. Athletic Council
7. Board of Education

ELIGIBILITY

Academic Eligibility - MHSAA Standard: All student-athletes must pass at least 66% of credit load potential for a full-time student per the MHSAA eligibility standard. For a student taking seven (7) classes, this standard requires passing five (5) classes in order to be eligible to participate.

Grade Checks: Grade checks will be conducted at the end of the week. Students who do not meet the MHSAA Standard for eligibility will have until the end of the school day on the following Monday to meet the standard. Students who do not meet the MHSAA Standard by the end of the school day Monday will be ineligible to compete that week. After three (3) consecutive weeks or four (4) weeks total of ineligibility for one (1) sport season, an athlete is no longer eligible for that sport season.

Ineligibility: Student-athletes that do not meet the MHSAA standard at the end of a given semester (passing five (5) classes that includes Academic Center) will be ineligible to play on any athletic team for the next semester.

GENDER AND ETHNICITY – POSITION STATEMENT

The MHSAA believes that gender and ethnicity equity is more than being in compliance with the law. It is a spirit. It is a personal ethic. It is a commitment to do what is right and fair for all athletes, officials, coaches and athletic administrators. It means creating an atmosphere and an environment where opportunities and resources are distributed fairly to all - an atmosphere where no person experiences discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnicity. It is the position of the MHSAA that its member schools monitor their athletic programs to ensure that athletic offerings are equitable and meet the interests and abilities of student athletes.

While the MHSAA does not have the authority to promote specific interpretations or to rule on compliance issues regarding federal and state laws, it does believe that all concerned should take steps to promote the spirit and intent of gender and ethnicity equity.

MCE ATHLETIC BOOSTERS ASSOCIATION

Parents/Guardians are welcomed and encouraged to become members of the Mason County Eastern Athletic Boosters Association. Booster meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month, at 7:00 p.m., in the MCE High School Library.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Mason County Eastern Board of Education, with the support from its administrative staff, recognizes that competing in athletics is not a right but a privilege and expects athletes to assume their responsibilities in adhering to established athletic regulations as approved by the Board. Students who are members of athletic teams representing Mason County Eastern Schools shall keep in mind that they are not only representing themselves but also the school, community, parents, and team and shall set an example for younger students in the school.

The Board of Education reserves the right to change these policies, as needed, during the school year and shall notify athletes and parents/guardians of these changes.

Participation in extracurricular competitive interscholastic **athletics is a student's privilege, not a right, that can be removed at any time for failure to meet the standards and requirements** of particular teams, school or school districts, leagues or conferences, and regional, statewide or national organizations to which the student's school belongs.

The following is a list of requirements and rules governing persons participating in athletics.

1. To complete an athletic suspension, the athlete must attend all contests, practices, and team meetings as required by his/her coach.
2. If an individual is competing in a MCE sport, the individual cannot compete in the same sport outside of school during that season. This is an MHSAA rule.
3. Before athletes can practice or participate, they must pass a doctor's physical exam and have the form filed in the junior high/high school office.
4. The athlete must sign and have his/her parent/guardian sign a statement that they have read and agree to follow the approved rules and regulations for athletes. The signature form must be on file in the junior high/high school office before they can practice or participate.
5. Ineligible athletes have the same practice and game rules as active players (show time, sit on bench entire game, assist team in all aspects of the game, etc.).
6. Practice for sports that start before the school year or after school officially ends is mandatory, unless excused by the coach.

Vacations during the school year: Coaches may schedule four (4) mandatory practices during Christmas break and two (2) mandatory practices during spring break. Coaches shall take into consideration when family obligations conflict with mandatory practices and will not penalize or comment to the athlete.

Athletes participating in two (2) sports, in one (1) season, will arrange their practice schedules with the coaches. Athletes are expected to practice for both sports on the day when both teams are practicing unless prior arrangement has been made with the coach. Competition takes precedence over practice on conflicting days.

7. Any game misconduct (identified by Officials, Coach, Athletic Director, or Administration) in any sport, along with any actions per athletic handbook or team rules, will result in the athlete being required to meet with the coach for minor infractions, i.e. technical. This will be enforced at the first practice after the infraction. Persistent misconduct or being removed from competition will result in meeting with the principal and/or athletic director and coach.
8. Athletes must dress and participate in Physical Education (if enrolled) to be eligible to Participate in athletic activities on that day.

SNOW DAYS

On days that school is canceled because of unsafe travel conditions, the athletic director or the superintendent's designee will determine whether high school interscholastic athletics are to take place by checking with each of the following:

1. County Road Commission and/or State Police and Sheriff Department
2. High School Principal
3. Superintendent

If all three agree travel to the contest is safe, then the athletic director may keep the scheduled game.

On days that school is canceled because of unsafe travel conditions, all middle school practices and games will be canceled. High school practices may be held after 12:00 p.m., if, in the opinion of the coach and athletic director, travel conditions have improved to allow athletes to practice. All practices in this instance are entirely voluntary on the part of the athletes and coaches. Non-participation will not affect an athlete's eligibility to play at the next event.

VIOLATIONS AND DISCIPLINE

Any student athlete who is participating or planning to participate in a sport **shall not use or possess** alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, illicit drugs, steroids, illegal use/abuse of prescription drugs or over the counter drugs and products. Students are considered guilty, if either ticketed by law enforcement, observed by school personnel, or self-admittance. Parents/guardians or students are to immediately notify the Athletic Director and/or other school administrators when the student athlete is ticketed by law enforcement. Students who are found guilty of criminal offenses will also be subject to this policy.

Athletes are always under the student athletic code from the beginning to the end of participation in athletics, including vacation breaks, summer recess and off season time.

a. First Violation:

Suspension of 25% from days of competition for which the athlete is otherwise eligible.

b. Second Violation:

Suspension of 100% from days of competition for which the athlete is otherwise eligible. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) may reduce the suspension by one-half, if the athlete complies with SAP rehabilitation recommendations.

c. Third Violation or More:

Third and subsequent violations will incur a penalty (suspension) of one (1) calendar year from date of violation.

d. Late Season Procedure:

If a suspension occurs late in the season and the number of days of competition remaining in the season is less than the number of days of competition required by the suspension, the suspension will extend into the athlete's next competitive season.

e. In Between Season Violation/Procedure:

If the suspension occurs between seasons, then it will be enforced in the next season of participation by the athlete in which he/she actually becomes and remains a member of the team for the complete season.

f. Reporting Violation Procedure:

The athletic director will attempt to notify parents by phone of the violation of the athletic code by and athlete and the penalty which will be imposed the same day the determination is made. The athletic director will notify the parent of an athlete, in writing, as soon as possible, after the penalty is determined of the nature of the violation and the penalty. Percentage of penalties will be rounded up to the next

whole number.

g. Appeal Procedure:

Within three (3) business days following the day of which the athlete/parents were first informed of the penalty, the athlete/parent may appeal the decision in writing to the athletic director/principal stating why he/she objects to the determination made by the athletic director/principal.

If the athlete/parent, after appeal to the Athletic Council, is dissatisfied with the outcome, an appeal to the Board of Education, through the Superintendent of Schools may be made in writing within five (5) business days. The Board of Education will hear the appeal as soon as practicable. The Board of Education will have the final disposition of the appeal.

While under appeal, an athlete who is ticketed by law enforcement, observed by school personnel, or found guilty of a criminal offense may not participate.

h. Athletic Council:

The Athletic Council will be composed of the superintendent, principal/and or athletic director and a minimum of 50% of head varsity coaches and one (1) student representative selected by the student council.

i. Rules:

All rules apply to the middle school and high school as two (2) different schools.

j. Voluntarily Seeks Assistance:

When an athlete with a drug and/or alcohol related problem voluntarily seeks assistance and the athlete attends and completes a treatment program, the athlete does not fall under the first offense category of the Mason County Eastern Athletic Program Handbook. The athlete will be considered to have voluntarily sought assistance, if there is no evidence that the athlete's actions were precipitated because he or she believed that he/she was about to be turned in for a policy violation. Should the athlete use or abuse alcohol or drugs after returning from a treatment program, the athlete shall be considered to have committed a second offense under the Mason County Eastern Athletic Program Handbook and treated accordingly.

k. Additional Requirements

1) Any athlete who wishes to be reinstated to a sport after a suspension must submit, to the athletic director, a written statement to this effect.

2) Athletes are to adhere to any additional specific rules set by the coach/administration for each sport (i.e., rules governing dress, grooming, transportation to and from games).

3) All uniforms and equipment are the responsibility of the person to whom it is issued. All lost or ruined uniforms and equipment are to be paid for by the athlete

4) If an athlete is suspended from school through the principal's office, he/she will not

participate in a contest or practice during the time of suspension. This will apply from the time the suspension begins until the athlete is reinstated.

5) Courtesy and sportsmanship will be extended to all opponents, officials, and persons in authority at all times.

6) An athlete must be in school for the entire a.m. or p.m. session of the normal school day prior to competing in the next scheduled athletic event. This includes dual enrollment classes, all Tech Prep classes, and any special programs students may be participating in during the school day. Only the principal's office can alter this, and it must be done prior to the athlete being absent.

7) An athlete shall treat his/her coach with respect.

8) For athletes not riding back to the school on the bus, a parent/guardian must make prior or personal contact with the coach, principal, or athletic director.

9) Before a team uniform is issued, an athlete must have turned in or paid for all uniforms from all previous sports.

10) Summer programs are **voluntary (not mandatory)** for athletes.

PUBLIC ACTS 111 AND 112 PROHIBIT AND PENALIZE HAZING

In 2004, the Michigan Legislature enacted legislation that prohibits hazing activities at educational institutions and provides penalties.

Hazing is defined in the law as an intentional, knowing or reckless act by a person who acted alone, or with others, that was directed against an individual and that person knew, or should have known, would endanger the physical health or safety of the individual, and that was done for the purpose of affiliation with, participation in, or maintaining membership in any organization. The law does not apply to an activity that was normal and customary in an athletic program sanctioned by the educational institution.

If the violation resulted in physical injury, the person would be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days, a fine of not more than \$1,000, or both. A violation resulting in impairment of a body function would be a felony resulting in imprisonment of up to five (5) years and a fine up to \$2,500, or both. A violation resulting in death of the person hazed would be punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment and a maximum fine of \$10,000, or both.

PUBLIC ACT 31 REQUIRES NOTICE THAT POSSESSION/USE OF STEROIDS IS A CRIME

In 1990, the Michigan Legislature enacted Public Law 31, which requires athletic service providers – including both educational and recreational athletic facilities – to post notice that warns that any person who uses or knowingly possesses an androgenic anabolic steroid violates Michigan law and is punishable by imprisonment and fine.

PUBLIC ACT 187 PROHIBITS PROMOTION/DISTRIBUTION OF PERFORMANCE ENHANCING SUPPLEMENTS

Michigan public school employees and volunteers are prohibited, by Public Law, 187 from promoting or supplying dietary supplements that carry claims of enhanced athletic performance. The law covers adrostenedione, creatine and any compound labeled as performance enhancing.