

Mercy Culture Preparatory
Athletic Handbook 2023-2024



Sports Offered

Elementary – Flag Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Track (5th – 6th Grade)
Junior High Boys – 11 Man Tackle Football, Basketball, Baseball, Track (7th – 8th Grade)
Junior High Girls – Volleyball, Basketball, Softball, Track (7th – 8th Grade)
High School Boys – 11 Man Tackle Football, Basketball, Baseball, Track (9th – 12th Grade)
High School Girls – Volleyball, Basketball, Softball, Track, Cheerleading (9th – 12th Grade)

Students wanting to participate in sports that their game seasons overlap will have to get approval from the athletic administration. For example, track and baseball or softball, we do allow participation in both, but a schedule will have to be worked out with coaches and a sport priority chosen.

ATHLETIC / SPORTS FEES

All student-athletes who play a sport are charged a fee the structure is below:
Athletic Fee – Flat Fee of \$400 for HS, \$300 for JH and \$150 for Elementary.

MC PREP ATHLETIC MISSION/PHILOSOPHY

MC Prep Athletic Department sole purpose is to lead student athletes to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that ushers in the presence of God daily. We partner with parents to see the success of the student athlete through the pursuit of excellence in the spirit, mind, and body. The success of MC Prep athletics is largely dependent upon the daily commitment by its athletes, coaches and parents to grow both spiritually and physically. The desire to win and excel is important, but to sacrifice Christ-like qualities to achieve a victory is foolish. Therefore, success cannot be measured solely by a scoreboard. We all win in the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.

The MC Prep athletic department believes that Christian principles and values taught at home, in the classroom, and through the church can also be put into practice through competition. Student-athletes have the responsibility of displaying Christ-like qualities to a community that sees athletes as leaders. These qualities are difficult to maintain unless Christ is the motivation, and the Holy Spirit is present. The student-athlete may feel pressure to perform for friends or personal goals, but this is not the motivation that should drive a Christian athlete. Colossians 3:23 tells us we are “*to do all as unto the Lord rather than men.*” Athletics can provide an opportunity to practice the principles of God’s Word, offer an arena for the demonstration of our faith in Jesus Christ, and open doors for ministry through which the true missions of MC Prep and God’s Kingdom are accomplished.

PHYSICALS

ALL 5th – 12th grade students are required to have an updated physical exam on file with the MC Prep Athletic Department. Athletes may not compete in practices (including tryouts) or games without a physical on file completed by a physician within the last 12 months. Physicals will be offered on July 11th and 13th. Due to insurance compliance, a one-week grace period is given from when the athlete’s physical expires and when a new one is required to be uploaded to RankOne.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

The following section outlines what is considered an excused absence for Athletic Purposes.

Excused Absence:

- 1.) Player Illness – Sick, Hospital, Doctor Appointment (Physical, Dental). When necessary, doctor’s note must be included.
- 2.) Immediate Family – Funeral, Wedding, Extended stay in Hospital. Immediate Family Includes: Grandparents, Parents, Aunts/Uncles and Siblings

Unexcused Absence:

- 1.) Anything else, not listed above, will be considered an unexcused absence for athletic department purposes. MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.
- 2.) Parent or player not notifying their sport’s coach of an absence is an Unexcused Absence.

COACHES' POLICIES

Each coach may establish additional rules or standards for the team or program in which they work, which go beyond what is listed in this handbook. These rules may even be unique to that sport or program. The coaches' policies will be consistent with and not contradict other school practices and policies.

PRACTICES AND GAMES

Being part of an athletic team is a commitment that affects many people (teammates, coaches, teachers, parents, etc.). This commitment cannot be entered into lightly and attendance is extremely important. One way that a student athlete operates in excellence and honor is by attending practices and games. Practice sessions are specifically designed to sharpen the talents and abilities that God has given each athlete. Coaches spend valuable time preparing for practices and attendance is mandatory.

- Players and managers must attend all practices and games unless cleared by the coach.
- Coaches must be contacted by email and "Band" application, in advance if any athlete or manager must miss a practice.
- All players have a role to play and are needed at all practices and games. However, we understand extenuating circumstances happen. In that case, please communicate as soon as possible so the coaches can prepare and stand in unity with the family.
- Coaches will conduct corrections on a case-by-case basis in a timely manner with the oversight of the Athletic Director.
- Missing a game, due to unexcused athletic absence, will result in a one game suspension and a possible loss of playing time. MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.
- Any player or manager who has three unexcused absences from their sport may be removed from the team. MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.
- Unexcused absences will result in loss of playing time and may be reflected in the athletic grade.

GAME/PRACTICE TRANSPORTATION

MC Prep will provide or arrange transportation to games or practices. Coaches will discuss rides a day or two prior to each activity to be aware of any transportation problems before they arise. If students or parents are providing transportation the following guidelines will be adhered to.

When athletes and managers are dismissed during school hours:

- Coaches should know who is riding with whom.
- A student may be dismissed during school to drive to a game only with written parental permission submitted to the school office specifying the date, destination, and who is allowed to ride to the game with their child.
- Students may be dismissed from school to ride to a game with another student only if both students' parents have given written permission for this arrangement. All permissions must be written, signed, and contain the travel date and the names of students involved in the arrangement.

PLAYING TIME

Playing time is a decision left to the discretion of coaches. At the middle school levels, instruction and active participation is stressed, and in most circumstances, our goal is for every athlete to participate in every contest unless academic ineligibility or some type of discipline is involved. At the junior varsity level, and especially at the varsity level, concepts of competition and role-playing within the team may result in some athletes not playing in some contests. Coaches strive to let every athlete play, but this does not always happen, and identical amounts of playing time for all players is not a goal at any level.

OUT OF SEASON EXPECTATIONS

During the school year, student-athletes are expected to give the in-season sport in which they are participating priority, and both coaches and the athletic director should clear any off-season sports training. Any organized

training for another sport during the season in which the athlete is participating (such as league or an open facility) should be cleared with the current in-season head coach and athletic director. Regardless of in-season versus out-of-season status, an emphasis will be placed on strength, speed and quickness training for all MC PREP athletes and must be attended during the school day. All incoming 7th-12th grade athletes are expected to work on and develop their athletic abilities during the summer. To facilitate this, the athletic department offers Royals Summer Training (RST), which develops their strength and speed and helps them develop spiritual and mental leadership skills. However, not mandatory RST is a crucial time to continue to build our athletic and school culture.

PARTICIPATION ON NON-SCHOOL TEAMS

At the MC Prep coach's discretion, student athletes are permitted to participate in non-MC Prep sports and athletic activities while participating on a MC Prep team, but participation must meet the following criteria:

- Outside participation may not conflict with MC Prep team schedules, including tryouts, practices, and games.
- Missing games due to participation on a non-MC Prep team will result in a one for one game missed with games not able to play. Example: Player A missed MC Prep basketball game for select team baseball game. Player A will sit on the bench for the next scheduled MC Prep game for the whole game.
- Missing practices due to participation on a non-MC Prep team will result in loss of playing time and possible removal from the team and is always considered an unexcused absence.
- MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.

ATHLETES with PART-TIME JOBS

Because of the demanding schedules of our athletic teams and the responsibility of each student-athlete to maintain high academic standards, student-athletes are reminded of the difficulty of holding part-time jobs during athletic seasons. Students with part-time jobs during athletic seasons will not be excused from practices, part of practice or games due to work responsibilities. Missing any part of practices or games due to a work conflict is considered an unexcused absence.

QUITTING A SPORT

The MC Prep Athletic Department believes that character is not built by quitting and encourages students to persevere through adversity. We also desire that MC Prep athletes see themselves as a part of the team even when injuries or academic ineligibility may restrict their participation in practices and games.

- An injured player is expected to attend all practices and games as if they were healthy.
- Any student athlete who quits a team, during a regular season, will receive a 65% grade on their report card for those six weeks. The student athlete will also have to sit out the next sports seasons. (Ex. An athlete that quits basketball during the season must sit out the following spring.)
- There will be a tryout window noted on the athletic calendar for each sport during which an athlete can choose not to participate in a sport without it resulting in the penalty stated above. Once this tryout window has passed and team selections have been completed, quitting should never be considered by the athlete or family.
- MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.

DRESS CODE

At all home and away athletic activities, MC Prep athletes represent their families, their coaches, their school, and their Lord. Therefore, it is expected that all concerned will dress in an acceptable manner as described in the Mercy Culture Preparatory Student Handbook or as required by their coach.

EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS

Student athletes are responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and protection of all equipment/uniforms issued. Student- athletes have forty-eight hours from the end of their season to turn in all issued equipment/uniforms.

Failure to do so will prevent the athlete from moving on to their next sport and can result in grades being held until turned in to the coach or paid for. The student athlete is responsible for lost equipment/uniforms and must make monetary restitution, if applicable, for lost items or for items damaged beyond reasonable wear and tear.

PLACES OF USE FOR TEAM UNIFORMS

- The only acceptable place for a uniform to be worn is for school athletic contests, unless directed by a coach.
- Athletes will not wear the team uniform for physical education classes or daily wear.
- Wearing team uniform jerseys with undershirts (not shorts, pants, or jackets) during the school day is permitted only on Friday Spirit days.

LOCKER/CHANGING ROOMS (NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED)

- No food or drinks are allowed at ANY time in MC Prep dressing rooms.
- Lockers and combination lock will be assigned. All items should be kept in the lockers, shelves, or benches, and off the floor. Valuables should be locked in locker at all times.
- All items left on the floor will be disposed of in a timely manner.
- Since many athletes use the locker room facilities at the same time, there is absolutely no room for horseplay, hiding other's belongings, etc.
- MC Prep assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items.
- One of our values is stewardship and the locker room should be stewarded with excellence. The privilege of the locker room can be revoked at any time by the athletic director.
- Only MC Prep high school athletes are allowed in the high school locker room.

WEIGHT ROOM (NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED)

- No students may be in the weight room unsupervised.
- No food or drink are allowed at ANY time in MC Prep weight room.
- Failure to heed verbal and written instructions will result in expulsion from the weight room.
- Individuals not following rules and verbal instructions will lose the privilege of working out in the weight room until proper behavior can be shown.

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY POLICY FOR ATHLETIC AREA

Students are not allowed to have their devices (phone, laptop or Ipad) out in the athletic area at any time. If a student needs to contact their parents, they will be allowed to use the public phones in the athletic offices. Each individual sport will decide the policy for phones during travel time for games or practices. If a coach has a study hall where the student needs their Ipad/laptop, they will be taken to a designated area for studying. If a student is caught with their device out, in the athletic area, we will follow the guidelines in the Student Academic Handbook. Players will be asked to secure their phones/devices in their lockers. Each player is responsible to provide their own lock and lock their athletic locker. MC Prep is not responsible for any missing items in the locker, if the locker is not locked.

HIGH SCHOOL "Athletic Folder Process"

In order to partner with families and students we will introduce an athletic folder process that helps with student academic, spiritual, and behavioral growth and accountability.

ATHLETIC INJURIES

- Report any injuries immediately to your coach and Athletic Director.
- Injured athletes are expected to attend all practices/games unless approved otherwise through the coach.
- Injuries requiring medical attention need medical clearance for further participation.

ATHLETIC MUSIC

All music played at MC Prep athletic practices, games, events, etc. must be Christian unless approved otherwise by the MC Prep Administration.

DISCIPLINES FOR TECHNICAL FOULS/CAUTIONS/EJECTIONS

- Student-athletes who receive any type of conduct foul, unsportsmanlike penalty, or technical foul, etc. in an athletic competition, while representing MC Prep, will be removed from the contest for a period deemed necessary by the coach.
- Multiple of these types of fouls during a season will be dealt with by the athletic director.
- A student-athlete who is ejected or removed from a contest, by officials, will follow the TAPPS guidelines. JH athletes will be dealt with by the athletic director.
- The athletic director and MC Prep administration will decide any exceptions to these policies.

HOMEWORK AND SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for completing all homework assignments. It is important for students to realize that with the privilege of playing sports comes the responsibility to keep up with their academics. Students should use class, academic support period, and home time wisely in order to accurately complete their assignments.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR HIGH SCHOOL

To be academically eligible to participate in extracurricular events, students must be enrolled full-time at Mercy Culture Preparatory. In most circumstances, students must be in attendance a minimum of four (4) class periods on the day of an event in order to participate. Eligibility rules for high school student athletes are based upon guidelines set by MC Prep and the Texas Association of Parochial and Private Schools (TAPPS).

REPORT CARD POLICY – Junior High and High School

- Athletes with one failing grade on the report card will sit a mandatory 1 week. They will attend practices and games during the 1 week. At games they will be required to wear their school uniform and help the coaches. At the end of the 1-week athletic administration will check grades, if all classes are passing the players will be allowed to participate. If any class is failing, they will have to sit an additional week of games. After 2 weeks they will be allowed to fully participate in games and practices.
- Athletes with 2 failing grades on the report card will sit a mandatory 2 weeks. They will attend practices and games during the 2 weeks. At games they will be required to wear their school uniform and help the coaches. At the end of the 2-week period athletic administration will check grades, if all classes are passing, they will have full reinstatement to the team. If after 2 weeks any class is failing, they will no longer be allowed to participate in games, but they will be required to practice and help the team.
- Athletes with 3 or more failing grades on the report card will be removed from all sports teams for the remainder of the season. They will be allowed to try out for the next season's sports after the current season is over.

REPORT CARD POLICY – Elementary Students (5th & 6th Grade)

Elementary students who fail a class on their report card will miss one game of their current sport schedule. Elementary students who fail multiple classes on their report card will miss 2 games of their current sport schedule.

ACADEMIC OR ATHLETIC SUSPENSION

In season athletes who are suspended by athletic or academic administration will be disciplined by their current coaches and the athletic director. MC Prep administration and the athletic director will decide any exceptions to this policy.

JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS GRADES

Athletes will be given a grade for their participation in strength training and the sport in which they participate. These grades will be given each six weeks. Each 3 six weeks will be averaged for a semester, these will appear on

high school transcripts, and are calculated in a student's overall numeric average and grade point average. Grades are assigned by coaches and are based upon the adherence to the athletic pillars.

ATHLETIC LETTERING POLICY

Students bearing a "letter" or letter jacket from MC Prep represent our Savior and our school at all times. In light of this, the awarding of a letter is considered both an honor and a privilege. Therefore, any student removed from a team for any reason will be barred from receiving a letter at the discretion of the administration or athletic director of Mercy Culture Preparatory, even if that student meets all other criteria given below.

GENERAL LETTERING REQUIREMENTS

- The athlete must be on the Varsity Roster of the athletic team throughout the entire season.
- If an athlete is added to the Varsity Roster during the course of the season, they must have played in 50% of the games for that season.
- The athlete must begin and complete an entire season, including post-season tournaments and playoffs.
- Any student who does not finish a season by his/her own choice or by his/her parents' choice is ineligible to letter.
- Any athlete who is unable to finish a season, for disciplinary reasons, will be ineligible to letter.
- The head coach and athletic director will use discretion in determining any awarded letters.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Parenting and coaching are both difficult vocations. By keeping lines of communication open between parents and coaches, many potential problems can be avoided. This begins with clear communication from the coaching staff to the parents and student athletes. The following guidelines are in place to help resolve conflicts, if and when they occur, in an appropriate manner that upholds the dignity of student athletes, parents and coaches. One of our goals is to instill in our student athletes a sense of ownership and responsibility for their actions. Therefore, it is important that student athletes learn necessary communication skills and how to resolve conflicts in a God-honoring way.

- A. The following are communications athletes and parents should expect from coaches.
 1. Coaching philosophy and goals
 2. Team requirements
 3. Individual coaching rules and consequences
 4. Location and times of all practices and contests

- B. The following are communications coaches should expect from parents and student athletes.
 1. Concern expressed directly to the coach. Athletes should make this first step.
 2. Notification of scheduling conflicts (practice or games) well in advance
 3. Positive role-modeling at contests and practices

- C. Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:
 1. Treatment of athletes, mentally and physically
 2. Ways to help athlete improve
 3. Concerns about an athlete's behavior
 4. College options and recruiting

24-Hour Rule

Feedback is one of our values at MC Prep and we appreciate the use of feedback in a positive way. We ask all parents to refrain from feedback after a practice or game for a full 24 hours. Please refrain from confronting a coach immediately before or after a contest or practice; instead wait for a full twenty-four hours before making contact of any sort (including emails or text messages). Because meetings of this nature rarely promote resolution, the "24 Hour Rule" will always be in effect. This not only allows for reflection and prayer, but for emotions to settle so rational, facts-oriented discussions can take place.

The Matthew 18 Principle

Matthew 18:15-16 states that, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'" MC Prep strongly believes in this principle. If an athlete or parent has a concern with a coach, the coach should be extended the courtesy of being addressed first, and all efforts should be made to work out the concern with the coach. In the event a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then the parent or athlete may ask for a conference with the athletic director and the coach. The goal should always be to guard against divisive speech and gossip by solving problems at the lowest level with the fewest people possible.

PLAYER-COACH RELATIONS

A constant effort should be made by student athletes to address coaches respectfully and acknowledge requests with terms such as, "Yes, sir/ma'am," or "Yes, Coach." Do not call coaches by their first or last name. There will be times of fun, fellowship, and mentoring, but the student athletes and coaches need to know the boundaries. A student should never speak disrespectfully to any authority. Doing so, as stated in the code of conduct, will be grounds for dismissal or correction. Parents are expected to require and model this respect for authority. Likewise, coaches should make every effort to correct athletes in a respectful manner and call out inappropriate conduct in a personal, one-on-one setting.

TRYOUT POLICIES

It is the desire of MC Prep to see many students involved in school athletics each year. Unfortunately, limits must be placed on the sizes of teams for each sport, and when numbers exceed the allotted amount for a particular team, tryouts and selections will be handled by the head coach with as much sensitivity and compassion as possible. Cuts are never easy, but they are necessary for a variety of reasons and serve to strengthen MC Prep's athletic program.

Announcements indicating the starting dates for tryouts for each sport will be given, and all students who meet MC Prep and TAPPS eligibility requirements may participate.

- Choosing team members is the responsibility of the head coach of the team.
- Varsity Head Coaches are allowed and encouraged to assist in the selection of sub-varsity teams.
- Before tryouts begin, coaches will provide information to all candidates including the length of the evaluation/tryout period (a minimum of three practice hours), and an explanation of the skills and abilities to be evaluated as well as the commitment necessary to make the team.
- Students should not try out for a team unless they are willing and able to make the emotional, physical, and time commitments necessary should they make the team.
- Athletes trying out for a team must be at all tryout practices. Coaches must be notified ahead of time if an athlete is going to miss the first day of tryouts for an excusable reason (illness, death in family, etc.).
- Coaches will consider a student athlete's previous academic performance when making selections.
- Coaches will discuss options for individuals who do not make the team before tryouts. One alternative might be to assist as team manager or statistician.

- An email will go out to each family to let them know if their son or daughter made the team. Cut lists will not be made public.

Please see signature page on the next page. This must be signed by student-athlete and parent electronically on Rankone as well as a physical copy that will be kept on file in the athletic department. Please keep the PDF copied emailed to you and your parents as a reference for the 2023-2024 athletic school year.

FOR STUDENT ATHLETES:

I have read the MC Prep Athletic Handbook shown above and understand that I may not participate without a signed copy of this document on file in the athletic office. I understand that these expectations are in place to help me grow and mature spiritually, emotionally, and physically. I understand that failure to uphold the expectations outlined above will endanger my athletic eligibility and may include, but not limited to, extra conditioning, suspensions, or removal from the team.

Student Athlete Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: / /

FOR PARENTS OF ATHLETES:

I have read the MC Prep Athletic Handbook. I will support the Mercy Culture Preparatory athletic program and personnel at all times through prayer and by attending and volunteering at MC Prep athletic events. I understand that misconduct may result in my expulsion from an event and possibly future events as well.

Parent / Guardian's Signature

Parent / Guardian's Signature

Parent / Guardian's Name (Printed)

Parent / Guardian's Name (Printed)

Date: / /

Date: / /