



**EMPOWERING ALL STUDENTS
FOR
GLOBAL SUCCESS**

**Madison City Schools
Athletic Handbook**

**Bob Jones High School
James Clemens High School
Discovery Middle School
Liberty Middle School
Journey Middle School**

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Madison City Schools athletic program is designed to enhance the educational and social development of young men and women through participation in sports. We believe that the commitment to excellence, teamwork and morale character achieved while being a part of our programs will serve as a foundation of each student's continued growth and life-long learning experience. It is our hope to maintain a program that is sound in purpose, reflects the goals and objectives of Madison City Schools, furthers each student's educational maturity, health and contributes to school spirit and morale.

Students who participate in MCS athletic programs commit themselves to the following goals:

- A primary focus on academic development and attendance.
- Avoidance of any action that would bring embarrassment or disrespect to themselves, their team, their school, and their community.
- Development of desirable personal health standards which includes the avoidance of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs and substances.
- Development of athletic skills.
- Growth of a competitive philosophy, which includes sportsmanship and a consistent awareness of school and community pride.

Please note that although the following procedures are intended to set minimum guidelines for participation in athletics, the local school administration may establish additional sport specific rules or procedures from time to time that must also be observed.

Athletic Directors

Kurt Yancey
Layne Rinks
Matthew Sweatman
Ryan Foy
Ben Smith

Bob Jones High School
James Clemens High School
Discovery Middle School
Liberty Middle School
Journey Middle School

Participation in athletics is a “Privilege” not a right that teaches values such as hard work, commitment to excellence, leadership, discipline, teamwork, and physical fitness within a framework of academic excellence. Participation also contributes to the physical, emotional, and social health of our students, along with promoting a sense of school pride and excitement.

All stakeholders involved in our program are on a mission to develop the “whole” student athlete. We strive to impact young people’s character, academics, and athletic development in a supportive but challenging atmosphere.

Try out/Team Selection and Dismissal Procedures:

Before you try out for any athletic program that requires tryouts, be prepared to accept the fact that you may not make the team. No one enjoys informing any student that he/she has not made the team, but in many instances it is necessary to reduce the number of participants to a manageable number. All roster decisions made by the coaching staff are final at the coach's discretion. *No candidate, including a senior, is guaranteed a spot on a team.*

In the event an athlete is selected for a team but later has to be removed from the program the following procedures will be followed.

1. The head coach will speak with the athletic director about the dismissal before it takes place.
2. After meeting with the Athletic Director, the head coach and including pertinent coaching staff will have a direct conversation with the parent via phone or conference setting to explain why the dismissal will take place.
3. The head coach will have a direct conversation with the student athlete and parent present or in private after the parent has been notified of the dismissal procedures.
4. All merchandise that was "furnished" (purchased with school funds) by the athletic program or merchandise that has not been paid in full from the spirit pack fee will be returned within 24 hours.
5. The student athlete will be removed from the Athletic P.E. setting as well as team roster.

Playing time:

We expect all players to work hard at improving their skills and trying to earn playing time to help the team win. Unfortunately, not every player has the same skill/ability level. As players progress through each level, the competition and skill levels of teammates and competitors improves as well. As a result of this taking place, some players find it hard to keep up. The coaching staff does not promise playing time. Instead, they believe that playing time should be earned through hard work, consistent effort, and the needed skill set. Even though the coaching staff does not promise playing time, here are three promises that the coaches will make concerning players:

1. **Coaches will not quit on any student athlete:** It does not matter if a player plays every minute of the game or no minutes in a game, the staff will continue working to help that player improve.
2. **Honesty with each player in the assessments of their skills:** The coaches will determine strengths and weaknesses of each player, and we will attempt to help the player improve weaknesses, while helping strengths to flourish.
3. **Clear communication:** It is the coach's job to communicate the athlete's role on the team and they will give their best effort to communicate this to each student athlete.

Practice Sessions:

Practice is a fundamental part of our athletic program to have a chance at success. The following guidelines will be followed by all players participating in our program:

- All practice sessions begin on time when the coach is ready to begin. Players are expected to be dressed and ready to begin practice at the designated times. Any player who is not prepared to begin when the practice session starts may be excused from that practice session and may be subject to the penalties invoked for a missed practice.
- All players will be dressed in appropriate uniforms as designated by the head coach. Only uniforms issued or approved by the head coach will be acceptable. Any equipment that is broken or in need of repair must be brought to the immediate attention of the coaches and practice must not continue for that player until the problem has been corrected.
- **Absences:** Players will occasionally have to miss a practice. In this case, all players must be cleared to miss a practice session prior to being absent. (Illness may be cleared by telephone call or email to the coach). Players who do not clear their absences may be considered unexcused and subject to the penalties that go with that infraction. Only those absences cleared by the head coach are considered excused.

The following guidelines cover absences:

- **Excused:** A player who is excused from missing a practice or a game will maintain the status of a regular player. However, he/she may lose their starting position or reduction in playing time as a result of missing the practice session. **Any conditioning missed during the absence will be made up by the player before they are allowed to compete with the team unless the coach decides to schedule the make up at a later date.**
 - **Unexcused:** A player who misses a practice session that is deemed "unexcused" by the coach will be warned after the first infraction. If a second violation occurs, the head coach will begin the process for dismissing the athlete from the program.
 - **Pre-arranged:** Any player who needs a pre-arranged absence should have that information communicated to the coach before the season or as quickly as possible. In the event that does not take place the coach will be forced to take disciplinary action based on the situation. School related activities are allowed but the coach will reserve the right to allow non school related absences to be permitted. The goal is to have all athletes committed to the program and to be committed you have to be there as well. Excessive absences can become contagious and destroy program building.
- **Open/Closed Practices:** The decision for a practice to be open or closed to parents and to the public, will be made by the head coach of that program.

Communication of Athletic Concerns:

Positive and respectful communication between parents/guardians, athletes, coaches, and administrators ultimately benefits the student athlete. Involvement in athletics will allow your student athlete to experience some of the most rewarding times of their lives. However, there will likely be times when things do not go their way or they disagree with a coach or procedure in place.

It is important that the parent realizes that these situations are as much a part of the learning process as are the good times. The coaching staff works hard to ensure the success of every athlete in our programs, and we ask that you respect their position on issues within the team.

We strongly encourage the athlete, and not the parents, to talk with the coaches regarding any team or personal issues during the season. This is not only the most direct and productive means of communication, but also a valuable method of teaching responsibility. However, we realize that situations may arise in which you as a parent deems it necessary to raise a concern. If a situation like this arises, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines. Areas that are considered appropriate for a parent to intervene are below.

Appropriate concerns: treatment of your child, ways you can help your child improve, and your child's behavior.

Issues not appropriate to discuss: playing time, team strategy, other athletes (in comparison), and play calling or game strategy.

****PLEASE Do not attempt to confront a member of the coaching staff before or after a game (this includes practice as well) with any team grades 7-12. These can be emotional times for both parties; meetings of this nature do not promote a resolution. If this does happen, this could result in further disciplinary action to be taken by the school and or law enforcement.**

Chain of command for conflict resolution:

Players and parents are expected to follow the proper chain of command when dealing with a problem or concern:

1. Player talks to the head coach at their team level
2. Player and parent talks to the head coach at their team level
3. Player and parent talks to the athletic director and head coach of that sport

***At no time will parents be allowed to talk to coaches without the student/athlete present. Disrespectful comments or foul language will not be allowed in the meeting. Also there will be no electronic devices used in the meeting communication process by either party unless**

a prior agreement has been made. Coaches and administrators reserve the right to decline any meeting where technology devices were not agreed upon beforehand.

***Non-Debatable Issues: Playing time, game strategy, scouting, and other personnel matters are not debatable.**

*** Coaches will notify any parent if their child is to be dismissed from the team before the dismissal when possible. In the event the parent cannot be notified first, the coach will communicate the issue with the parent within 24 hours. (See dismissal procedures)**

Fees:

All spirit pack/player fees will be communicated to parents by e-mail and/or parent meetings. Fundraisers may be offered to assist with the cost of the spirit pack/player fees. Parents and athletes may be asked to participate in fundraising efforts. If there is no fundraiser participation by the athlete or parent, the coach will not be allowed to assist with the cost of the spirit pack/player fees. A letter will be given to the parent at the conclusion of the season if an unpaid balance remains. **The unpaid balance must be paid before the athlete can participate in athletics the following school year in any sport.** Due to athletics being an extracurricular activity and a privilege, the athletic program has the right to suspend the privilege of participation. Any financial arrangements needed must be discussed with the head coach to be submitted to the athletic director. All arrangements will be determined on a case by case basis by the athletic director in conjunction with the head coach.

All fees that are raised in the name of the school are nonrefundable. Fees that are paid and not raised will be considered for refund based on unforeseen circumstances that are out of the control of the athlete, such as moving out of the school district and health reasons. Spirit packs will not be refunded and are property of the athlete. **If an athlete quits or is removed from a team, all paid fees will be forfeited.**

Player Expectations:

1. Be committed to your team
2. Maintain eligibility by performing well academically
3. Accept your role on the team with an unselfish “team first” attitude
4. Understand playing time is not guaranteed but earned
5. Be on time and have rides to and from practice
6. Communicate with the coach if you will miss for any reason (family situation or medical emergency) as early as possible and understand some absences will not be permitted
7. Plan/organize and schedule to make team commitments
8. Be respectful and conduct yourself as positive leaders in our schools and community
9. Behavior deemed inappropriate by coaches, principals, or faculty will result in consequences.

Parent Expectations:

Roles are important on any team. Parents have a very important role in the program. We feel that the following roles are very important for parents to follow in support of the program:

1. Be positive with your child.
2. Be committed to your child’s role on the team
3. Please do not instruct your child before or during a game because it may conflict with the coach’s game plan. (However, a positive conversation before/after the game is always welcomed.)
4. Refrain from negative comments about coaches or other athletes due to lack of playing time or even due to a loss.
5. Support the entire team at games, regardless of whether your child is playing or not.
6. Please remember that although you may not agree with the style of coaching or philosophy, your child will have to deal with different leadership styles in life.
7. Any questions or concerns should be brought to the coach. Meetings may be set up during the coaches planning period or after school.
8. Please do not approach a coach after practice regarding issues or concerns. Any issues or concerns that need to be addressed should be properly scheduled.

Homeschool Athletes

1. HOME SCHOOL STUDENTS must be enrolled at the beginning of the semester at the member public school that serves the area in which the student's parents reside.

(a) The AHSAA recognizes a homeschool student as one who has reported as such with the local county/city board of education (superintendent) and as one who is earning academic credit in compliance with Alabama law through one of the approved home school options (2014 Ala Code 16-28-1).

In accordance with Alabama's Compulsory Attendance Act,

- (b) The homeschool program/school must report enrollment and attendance to local school system.

1. ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Non-traditional students will adhere to all AHSAA rules applicable to academic accountability (Rule I, Section 9: Academic Rule, Requirements). Home School Students will be required to submit four core course grades from their home school program to the school at the end of the school year for academic eligibility beginning with grade 7 through the end of the first semester in grade 12.

Madison City Schools Procedures for Homeschool Athletes and electives

Per Madison City Schools, Homeschool Athletes in grades 9-12 must take two electives. One of the electives must be the Athletic PE block if offered or a PE class. The other elective is one that is allowable after speaking with the Athletic Director of chosen school.

Per Madison City Schools, Homeschool Athletes in grades 7-8 must take one elective. The only elective that is available for middle school Homeschool Athletes to take is PE. Due to the middle school having instructional blocks that rotate weekly, the PE block must be taken during C Block.

ACCESS and or online classes are not options to fulfill the required electives .

Middle School Athletes Participating in High School

- Only 8th Graders may be considered.
- Can only move up to the Varsity level. Moving to the Freshman and Junior Varsity level will not be allowed.
- Must make the Varsity team as a potential starter or be a substantial contributor as a backup on Varsity.
- No reverting back to middle school athletics once the decision is made.
- Cannot put the middle school program in limbo of not having enough players to compete or field a team.

Varsity coaches cannot engage with middle school athletes or parents about participating at the Varsity level.

High school athletic director/principal will communicate with the middle school athletic director/principal in regards to potential athletes moving to the varsity level and follow all guidelines in place concerning this matter.