



Guide For Middle School Student-Athletes And Parents

General Standards and Forms for Participation in Interscholastic Athletics

The Purpose of this Guide

This Athletic Guide is designed to be useful to student-athletes and parents. The intent is to condense that information which is necessary to effectively understand and participate in the athletic program in Anne Arundel County. Athletic participation is a privilege, not a right.

The guide includes a collection of information pertaining to state and county procedures and regulations.

There may be questions which arise that may not be covered in this guide. Remember, this is only a guide. Only open communications between coaching staff, athletic manager, parents, students, and school administrators will ensure an effective athletic program.

For complete guidelines and policy information view the state and county handbooks at www.aacps.org/athletics

The items described below are highlights from the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Middle Schools Athletic Handbook. Please refer to the handbook for a complete description of all guidelines, regulations, and policies that govern the athletic program.

I. General Standards for Eligibility

1. Enrollment

Students shall be officially registered and attending an AACPS middle school. They may represent only the school in which they are registered.

2. Physical Examination

Students shall be examined and certified to the middle school principal as being physically fit to participate in any try-out, practice or contest of a school team. The examination shall be performed by a licensed physician, certified physician assistant under the supervision of a licensed physician, or certified nurse practitioner. A new pre-participation physical evaluation form must be submitted each school year of participation. The submitted form must include the following information: name of student, date of exam, clearance to participate in athletics (must specifically state athletics or sports), medical provider's signature, and medical provider's verification/stamp. The clearance to participate designation must be dated as of June 1st for the subsequent school year and will be valid through the last playable spring season event. Pre-participation physical evaluation forms will be reviewed and approved/denied by the athletic manager.

Injury/accident/illness since physical form approval:

Families shall self-report to the athletic manager, and/or head coach if their child has had an intervening injury/accident/illness since the date of their most recent physical, such that there are concerns that the student-athlete is not presently fit to participate for the upcoming season. In such cases, the athletic manager shall consult with the trainer and/or school nurse. They will determine if new clearance is necessary through an updated medical examination, recertification form, or injury clearance form. The athletic manager and/or coach will communicate with the family accordingly.

3. Athletic Insurance & Parental Permission

Every candidate for and participant on an interscholastic team must provide proof of parental permission and have insurance covering possible accident or injury in school-sponsored games, practice sessions and during travel to and from athletic contests. Such coverage may be provided through the purchase of student accident insurance, or by providing proof of similar or superior insurance protection. Parents and/or guardians of athletes should anticipate the distinct possibility of incurring medical expenses for injuries related to participation in sports that will not be covered by insurance.

II. Scholastic Eligibility Code

Academic Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics or extracurricular activities, grades 6 through 8, a student must maintain a "C" average (2.0 Athletic Eligibility Score or greater) as determined by existing county grading procedures in all courses taken in a given eligibility period.

Unlike the AACPS high school program, there will not be any academic probation program for middle school athletics.

Any report card released during a middle school sports season will not alter a student-athlete's eligibility.

Fall Sports academic eligibility is based off 4th marking period report cards.

Winter Sports academic eligibility is based off 1st marking period report cards.

Spring Sports academic eligibility is based off 2nd marking period report cards.

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III. Attendance

1. Each student-athlete is required to be on time and attend all scheduled classes in their entirety.
2. In the case of extenuating circumstances, the principal of the school may grant an exception for excused class absences.
3. Class Cutting is defined as unlawful absence from a class or school activity. As a result of administration verification of class cutting for any part of the school day, the student-athlete will be ineligible to compete in the next event. Once a student-athlete is given a warning for a first offense, administration verification of a second offense of class cutting during the same sports season will result in the removal of that student-athlete from the team for the remainder of the sport season.

IV. Squad Membership

1. The coach of each sport is responsible for the determination of squad membership. An athlete's playing time and position will be determined solely by the coaching staff.
2. Student-athletes are subject to all rules beginning on the first day of try-outs at the start date of the specific sport season.
3. Once an athlete begins the try-out process for a sport at any Anne Arundel County Public School that athlete becomes ineligible to participate in that sport at another Anne Arundel County Public School for the remainder of the season. Families seeking an exemption to this guideline must submit the Intercounty In-Season Transfer Request Form to the Coordinator of Athletics at Anne Arundel County Public Schools BOE (2644 Riva Rd, Annapolis, MD 21401). The Coordinator of Athletics will initiate a process that will include, but is not limited to, a review of prior discipline, attendance and financial obligations at the current school.

V. Practice

Starting Dates for Practice (all subject to change)

- Fall sports—Monday, August 31, 2026
- Winter sports—Monday, October 26, 2026
- Spring sports—Monday, March 15, 2027

Notification to Student-athletes & Parents

Students may be required to practice or compete off campus. Contact specific sport coaches at your school for additional information.

VI. Conduct of Student-athletes

1. Any conduct deemed detrimental to the student-athlete, team and/or overall good of the school system, anytime, on and off campus, can result in penalties ranging from verbal reprimand to dismissal from the team as determined by the head coach of the team as determined by the head coach, in consultation with administration before rendering penalties.
2. Hazing is not permitted. Hazing is defined as an act which creates harm and is affiliated with initiation to a team. Hazing may involve an act committed against a student or a situation in which a student is coerced into committing an act.

Concussion Awareness

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury causing an immediate and, usually, short-lived change in mental status or an alteration of normal consciousness resulting from a bump, blow, jolt, shaking, or spinning of the head and body.

Warning signs of a concussion

— For Immediate Attention, Call 911

Signs Observed by a Parent/Guardian

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

Signs Reported by the Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

What Should You Do If You Think a Concussion Has Occurred?

1. Seek medical attention right away.

A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe to return to play.

2. Keep your child out of play until medically cleared.

Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's okay. Children who return to play too soon, while the brain is still healing, risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

3. Inform all coaches about any recent concussions.

Coaches should know if your child has a recent concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell them.

4. Helping your child return to school safely after a concussion. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually. Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receive help with schoolwork
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness

What is Sudden Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest:

- Occurs suddenly and often without warning.
- Is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system.
- Causes the person to lose consciousness (passes out) and have no pulse.
- May cause death within minutes if not treated immediately.

Warning signs of Sudden Cardiac Arrest

— For Immediate Attention, Call 911

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs and symptoms, such as:

- Fainting or seizures during exercise
- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Extreme fatigue
- Chest pains
- Racing heart

Any of these symptoms/warning signs that occur while exercising may necessitate further evaluation from your physician before returning to practice or game.

Treatment for Sudden Cardiac Arrest

1. Call 911
2. Begin C.P.R.
3. Use an Automated External Defibrillator (A.E.D)

Removal from play/Return to play

Any student-athlete who shows signs and symptoms of SCA must be removed from play. The symptoms can happen before, during or after activity. Play includes all athletic activity.

Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated. Clearance to return to play must be in writing. The evaluation must be performed by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or cardiologist (heart doctor). The licensed physician or certified registered nurse practitioner may consult any other licensed or certified medical professional.

What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms.

- When the heart stops, oxygenated blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs.
- Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes.
- **Most people who experience SCA die from it.**

COVID-19 Awareness

Below are links for the most updated COVID-19 information from the Centers of Disease Control, the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association, and the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. AACPS will adhere to COVID-19 recommendations and guidelines from these organizations.

CDC

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

health.maryland.gov/pages/home.aspx

Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA)

www.mpssaa.org

AA County Dept. of Health

aahealth.org

AACPS

www.aacps.org/coronavirus

By signing the acknowledgements at the end of this form student-athletes and parents are agreeing to the following:

- I will follow all current AACPS guidelines related to COVID-19
- I will not send my child to extracurricular athletic and activities if they are exhibiting any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 (or presumed to have COVID-19).
- I will review symptoms with my child and monitor my child's symptoms every day that my child attends in-person activities/events.
- If my child becomes ill during any in-person activity/event, I will ensure they are picked up promptly. I will follow-up with an authorized health care provider/health department and comply with recommended quarantine or isolation as directed.
- Students must be free of fever without the use of fever reducing medications.
- The Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19 include: Fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, shaking chills, chest pain, fatigue, racing heart rate, dizziness, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, sore throat, or unusual pains.



Authorization for Participation in Scholastic Athletics

School Year **2026-2027**

As parents or legal guardians of _____

(Printed Name of Student)

We hereby authorize and consent to our child's participation in interscholastic athletics and sports. We understand that the sport in which our child will be participating is potentially dangerous, and that physical injuries may occur to our child requiring emergency medical care and treatment.

Except as provided by law, in consideration of the acceptance of our child by the Anne Arundel County Public Schools in its athletic program, we agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County, its members, the Superintendent of Schools, the Principal, all coaches, and assistant coaches, and any and all other of their agents, and/or employees against any and all liabilities, claims, costs, suits, actions, judgments, and expenses, arising out of our child's participation in interscholastic athletics and sports.

We hereby give our consent and authorize the Board of Education of Anne Arundel County and its agents, servants, and/or employees to consent on our behalf and on behalf of our child, to emergency medical care and treatment in the event we are unable to be notified by reasonable attempts of the need for such emergency medical care and treatment.

We understand and agree that we will be responsible for all medical bills and costs that may be incurred as a result of medical care and treatment of our child, and agree to provide proof of insurance coverage of our child against accidents and injuries in school sponsored games, and practice sessions, and during travel to and from athletic contests.

Students who have made a decision to take part in the athletic program will be required to practice and participate in scheduled contests after school and possibly on non-school days. Supervision at practice, games, and travel will be provided by the school.

In addition, it is recognized that all students must comply with eligibility regulations that govern athletics in Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

Every student trying out for, or participating on, an interscholastic team must be insured against possible accident or injury in school sponsored games, practice sessions, and during travel to and from athletic contests. Such coverage may be provided by the purchase of student accident insurance.

If a student is attending a middle school without the benefit of residing (with parents or legal guardians) within the school's attendance area and/or without special permission of the Pupil Services Office, the student in question is subject to disciplinary action which could result in loss of athletic eligibility for a period of time, ineligibility in a specified sport for the forthcoming year or penalties as may seem justified in the particular case. A student being taught by parental request at home (home instruction) that is not enrolled in Anne Arundel County Public Schools cannot participate in athletics.

Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

**Application to Participate in Athletics**School Year **2026–2027**

Failure to fully complete this application (including all signatures) and submit it to the coach or athletic director will result in exclusion from participation in the interscholastic athletic program of Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

1. Sports—Check the sport(s) you are trying out for this year (circle gender where applicable)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Fall | Winter | Spring |
| ☐ Basketball (Boys Girls) | ☐ Flag Football (Boys Girls) | ☐ Soccer (Boys Girls) |
| ☐ Track and Field | ☐ Unified Bocce | ☐ Cross Country |

2. Student Information

Name	Grade	Age	Birth Date
Street Address		Home Telephone Number	
City, State, ZIP Code		Emergency Telephone Number	
Parent/Legal Guardian Name(s)		Parent/Family Email	

3. Residency—If residency changes during the sport season, parents must notify the athletic manager immediately and update this form.

Name of Middle School	Community of Development of Residence
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My child: ☐ Resides (with parents or legal guardians) within the above attendance area,
or ☐ Is attending the above school with special permission of the Office of Pupil Services of Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

4. Insurance—Your form will be returned if this section is not complete.

Does your son/daughter/ward, have insurance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Insurance Provider	Policy Number
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Do you wish to purchase school insurance? ☐ Yes ☐ No If 'Yes,' you must provide proof of school insurance to the Athletic Manager.

5. Acknowledgement/Signatures—A parent/legal guardian must check the box next to each item and sign at the bottom.

Athletic Handbook	☐ I understand that I must abide by and will be held to the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Middle School Athletic Handbook (most recent version). I understand that this handbook is available online at aacps.org/athletics and through my Athletic Manager.
Athletic Guide	☐ I have read and understand the 2026–27 Guide for Middle School Student-Athletes and Parents in its entirety.
Concussion Awareness	☐ Specifically, I have read and understand the Concussion Awareness information provided in the Guide for Middle School Student-Athletes and Parents
Cardiac Arrest Awareness	☐ Specifically, I have read and understand the Sudden Cardiac Arrest information provided in the Guide for Middle School Student-Athletes and Parents
COVID-19 Awareness	☐ Specifically, I have read and understand the COVID-19 Awareness information provided in the Guide for Middle School Student-Athletes and Parents
Health Plan	☐ Yes ☐ No Does your child currently have a Health Plan on file with the school nurse? —I am obligated to inform the athletic manager if my child obtains a Health Plan during the sports season.
Media Release	☐ Yes ☐ No Consent for images, audiovisual accounts, videos, and artwork of child to be used in AACPS and other media ventures.
Permission	☐ My child has permission to participate in interscholastic athletics for the 2026–27 school year.

Student Signature	Date	Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature	Date
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