

Our Lady of Mercy High School



Student-Athlete Handbook
2010-2011

Our Lady of Mercy High School

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Foreword

Dear Student-Athlete and/or Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the Our Lady of Mercy Junior and Senior High School Athletic Program. Congratulations! You have made an excellent choice to join the Mercy athletic family. We pride ourselves on a tradition of integrity, excellence, impeccable sportsmanship, and success.

I present you this handbook today as a valuable resource, providing the information you will need to enable your success in interscholastic athletics at Mercy.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is a **privilege** and a supplement to the primary academic mission of Our Lady of Mercy High School. The primary goal of the Mercy athletic program is to provide positive, high quality experiences that promote individual growth in a safe and healthy environment. When you **choose** to participate in our sports program, you commit yourself to certain responsibilities and obligations. Participation in athletics, as a privilege, can be suspended for violations of school policies and/or athletic policies. This handbook will acquaint you with specific policies and rules deemed necessary to operate a well-organized program of interscholastic athletics. The policies are meant to supplement those outlined in your Mercy “Student Handbook” and by all means to correlate with them.

We encourage all students to participate in some phase of our program from modified, junior high programs to the intensive varsity programs that compete against the very best in Rochester and New York State. Our Lady of Mercy High School is a member of Section V of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, competing in Class A (based on enrollment) for most varsity sports. Mercy is a voting member of the Private-Parochial League of Rochester and an associate member of the Finger Lakes High School Athletic Association for Varsity Alpine Skiing and Modified Lacrosse and Track.

Please call me with any questions/concerns regarding the athletic program at 288-7120 x.331, or email at nschlierf@mercyhs.com.

Dr. Nick Schlierf
Athletic Director

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** Quoted Directly from “Student Handbook”

New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA):

Our Lady of Mercy is a charter member in NYSPHSAA and is in Section V with other local schools. New York State is divided into 11 Sections plus New York City. The State Association has a set of rules to govern each sport. Section V holds tournaments for the varsity level and the section winner moves on to the state tournament.

Mercy Sports, By Season and Competition Level

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Varsity</u>	<u>JV</u>	<u>Modified A</u>	<u>Modified B</u>
Competitive Cheer	X	X	(open to 7 th and 8 th graders also)	
Crew*	X	X		
Cross Country	X	X		X
Golf	X			
Sailing*	X			
Soccer	X	X		X
Swimming	X	X		
Tennis	X	X		
Volleyball	X	X		X
<u>Winter</u>				
Basketball	X	X	X	X (2)
Bowling	X			
Competitive Cheer	X	X		
Indoor Track	X	X		X
Skiing	X	X		
<u>Spring</u>				
Crew*	X	X		
Lacrosse	X	X		X
Sailing*	X			
Softball	X	X		X
Track & Field	X	X		X

(*Not recognized by NYSPHSAA or Section V)

NYS Education Department – Character Definition

The following definition of character is from the New York State Education Department’s Educational Framework for Athletics (EFA). Character, one of the educational goals of a quality interscholastic athletic program, is defined as a student athlete who demonstrates:

1. responsibility
2. accountability
3. dedication
4. trustworthiness/fair play
5. self-control

Principles of the Interscholastic Athletic Program

Interscholastic athletics serve as a miniature model of life, providing opportunities for students with regard to responsibility, fair play, cooperation, concern for others, leadership, respect for authority, good citizenship, loyalty, and tolerance. Winning games has often been considered the measure of success. That is not so at Mercy High School. This is not to say that the will to win is not important. It is very much a part of the total development of a student-athlete. However, of considerably greater importance, is the development of the young woman, and the affording of each individual the opportunity to fulfill her potential. Consequently, the athletic program, which is centered around the welfare of the student, is a vital part of the total Mercy High School Curriculum.

To fully utilize the potential of athletics for educational enrichment, the interscholastic athletic programs are:

1. regarded as an integral part of the total educational program and are conducted worthy of such regard.
2. a supplement rather than a substitute for basic physical education programs.
3. subject to the same administrative control as the total educational program.
4. conducted by persons with adequate training either in physical education or through coaching certification programs.
5. conducted with the physical welfare and safety of participants a high priority.
6. conducted in accordance with the letter and spirit of the league, section, state, and national athletic associations' regulations.

Mercy's Interscholastic Athletic Program Code of Ethics

It is the duty of all concerned with school athletics:

- *To emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play.
- *To eliminate all possibilities tending to destroy the best values of the game.
- *To stress the values derived from playing the game fairly.
- *To show courtesy to visiting teams and officials.
- *To establish a happy relationship between visitors and hosts.
- *To respect the integrity and judgment of sports officials.
- *To achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules of the game and the standards of eligibility.
- *To encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgment by the players on the team.
- *To recognize that the purpose of athletics is to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of the individual players.
- *To remember that an athletic contest is only a game, not a matter of life and death for player, coach, school, official, fan, or community.

Standards of Conduct
(taken directly from Mercy “Student Handbook”)

Our Lady of Mercy High School strives to maintain an environment conducive to learning. Faculty, administration and parents accept the responsibility for defining the boundaries of conduct, which encourage a student to think, create, and express herself to the fullest extent of her ability.

In keeping with the philosophy of Our Lady of Mercy High School, a Mercy student accepts responsibility for her spiritual, intellectual, personal and social growth. She works to gain awareness of her role in Church and society, and she understands the need for her particular attention to issues of injustice, inequality, and oppression. She respects the Christ-centered climate of the school’s programs and strives to model her life on Christian values.

<p>A Mercy Student</p> <p>...is respectful of herself and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her general conduct and use of language are appropriate for an atmosphere of learning. • She is courteous to all. • She is considerate of others. • Her sense of cooperation fosters the Mercy spirit of community. • She respects gender, racial, religious and physical differences. • She respects school property and equipment as well as the personal belongings of others. <p>...is honest in and out of the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her performance on tests, homework, and projects reflects her efforts alone. • She shares her work with others only when it is required by an assignment. • She expects honesty from others as well as herself. <p>...is academically responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She reports to class on time and prepared with proper materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If she must be absent from class, she takes the initiative to make up missed work. • She practices self-discipline regarding her academic studies by meeting deadlines for homework, assignments and long-term projects. • She demonstrates consideration for others’ rights to learn. <p>...actively cares for herself and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is rested, nourished, and cares for her personal health. • She promotes healthy choices by others. • She resolves conflict in a non-violent manner. • She recognizes the importance of seeking help from proper school authorities when needed for herself and others. • She obeys the dress code policy. • She obeys all school rules while in the building and while representing Mercy in the greater community. She accepts the consequences for violation of rules.
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Philosophy, by level, of Our Lady of Mercy Athletics

Modified Sports

Seventh and eighth graders have the opportunity to participate at the modified level. At this level, coaches emphasize the fundamentals of team play, learning the sport's basic skills and rules, and creating a positive experience for all involved.

It is not program policy to cut at the modified level. However, if the number of students trying out for a team creates a situation that would be difficult to manage, would pose a safety issue, or is problematic because of facility considerations, reducing team size may be necessary. Ultimately, the number of teams and size of rosters will be determined by the availability of financial resources, qualified coaches, suitable facilities, and a safe environment.

At the modified level, only occasionally will practices or contests be scheduled on weekends.

Selection Classification for Seventh and Eighth Graders

Exceptional seventh or eighth graders may be permitted to try out for a junior varsity or varsity team under the Selection Classification process designed by the NYSPHSAA. Several criteria must be met in order to play at these higher levels. They include parent and physician approval, and achieving passing scores on the NYS athletic performance test. The Junior Varsity or Varsity coach will determine if there is room on the team's roster AND whether the student's sport ability appropriates participation at the Junior Varsity or Varsity level. If both criteria are approved by the coach, the Athletic Director will begin the "Selection Classification" process.

Junior Varsity Philosophy

The Junior Varsity (JV) level is intended for those who display the skill potential for continued development towards the varsity level. Consequently, some athletes may be cut during tryouts. Although all JV teams vary, freshmen and sophomores occupy most of the roster.

At this level, as compared to the modified level, athletes are expected to make a more visible commitment to the sport, team and their continued self-development outside the school season. At the JV level, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, including strength and endurance training, and refinement of fundamental skills, elements, and strategies of team play. JV programs strive for balance among player development, team development, and achieving victory. Consequently no amount of playing time is guaranteed to any player.

Practice sessions are vital to a successful JV program. Participants should expect to practice and compete six days a week as will be expected at the varsity level. While contests and practices are rarely scheduled for holidays, practice sessions are usually scheduled during school vacation periods. With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the JV level.

Varsity Philosophy

Varsity competition is the culmination of each sport's development program. Usually composed of juniors and seniors, the team size is limited at the varsity level. While contest participation is desirable, a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed. Some athletes may see no time at all.

A positive attitude, strong work ethic, and advanced level of game skills are prerequisites for a position and playing time on the varsity squad. Varsity sports require a six-days/nights-a-week commitment. This commitment is extended into vacation periods for all sport seasons. The dedication and commitment needed to participate in a successful varsity program should be taken seriously. Various commitments outside of the sport season may also be necessary for the optimum development of player abilities.

The varsity coach is the leader of that sport's program and determines the system of instruction and strategy for that program. Preparing and striving to win each contest while trying to develop the team's and each individual's maximum potential are worthy goals of a varsity coach.

Athlete/Parent Communication Process

During the course of the season, concerns may arise. The following communication process should be followed:

1. Athlete meets with Coach(es).
2. Athlete and Parent(s) meet with Coach(es).
3. Athlete, Parent(s), Coach(es) meet with the Athletic Director.
4. Athlete, Parent(s), Coach(es), Athletic Director, meet with the Principal.

The Coach has been hired to lead and manage the team. Many decisions are left to the Coach's discretion:

Issues parents are NOT PERMITTED to discuss with the coach(es)

- Playing time
- Team strategy or play calling
- Other players

Items to discuss with coach

- The treatment of your daughter
- Ways to help your daughter improve
- Concerns about your daughter's behavior

It is a difficult reality to accept one's daughter not playing as much as one would hope. However, the Coaches are the professional experts and will make decisions based on what they believe is best for the team.

Equipment and Uniforms

Equipment and uniforms are issued by the coach and are the property of the school, and are due one week after the conclusion of the season. Failure to comply will result in fines. If the equipment or uniform is lost or damaged the student is responsible for the **replacement** cost. Students will not be able to try out for the next sport until all expenses have been paid. Uniforms are not an extension of the athlete's personal wardrobe. Uniforms and warm-ups are to be worn during games/matches only, not during school or P.E. classes. Special permission will be given by the Assistant Principal for teams to wear uniforms in special circumstances such as days of sectional competition.

Family Vacations

When parents and student athletes choose to take their family vacations during the sport season, it must be understood that the time the athlete misses can affect team chemistry and personal conditioning. Student athletes who miss practices or competition for any reason may have their position or playing time adjusted. Athletes should inform their coaches as soon as they know they will be missing any time from the team schedule.

Transportation

The school provides no team or bus transportation. Transportation is provided by the parents of the team. In the beginning of the season, a parent coordinator is selected for each team. The parent coordinator sets up carpooling to help ease the burden of each parent driving to every contest. It is expected that every parent will assist in transportation for the team. While an athlete may drive herself to and from athletic events, she is NOT ALLOWED to transport one or more teammates.

Health Forms

Before the start of each season, each athlete must be approved by the school health official. To be eligible for tryouts at the beginning of the season, each athlete must:

- Have a physical dated within one year from the start of the season, and turn the physical form into the school health office.
- Have a record of an updated tetanus shot registered with school health office.
- Sign and fill out the athletic re-certification form. This is to be filled out by a parent and signed by both a parent and the athlete. This form must be filled out for each sport prior to each season and is only valid 30 days prior to tryouts.
- Turn in all health forms to the health office. The coach cannot, and will NOT, accept any forms.
- Health forms and parent permission slips are available on the Athletics page of the school website.

If the school health official does not give your daughter full approval, your daughter is ineligible to tryout for any team. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**

For questions about health forms, please contact the Health Office at 288-7120 ext. 314.

In-Season Injuries

The school nurse must receive clearance from the athlete's physician, in writing, to allow an injured athlete to return to participation with her team. Athletes may also be supervised medically from the Certified Athletic Trainer of University Sports Medicine working for and at Mercy High School. The Trainer also carries the right to prohibit an athlete from participation due to injury.

School Attendance

A student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in any athletic contest or practice that day unless the student has been in attendance by 8:45 am, or presents a valid excuse to the athletic director. Legal excuses accepted by New York State include:

- Doctor/Dental Appointment
- Death in the family
- Religious Observation
- Impassable roads or weather
- Approved college visit
- Music lesson
- School Sponsored event

Academic Eligibility

APPLIES ONLY TO JUNIOR VARSITY AND VARSITY PARTICIPANTS –
MODIFIED ATHLETES ARE EXEMPTED FROM ACADEMIC
REQUIREMENTS

- A junior varsity or varsity student-athlete who receives one or more course grades below 65:
 - (1) On a **Progress Report** (weeks 5, 15, 25, 35), the student is suspended from practices and games until course grade(s) reach 65 or higher.
 - (2) On a **Quarter Report Card** during the season will be suspended from practices and games for a minimum of one complete school cycle (A-F). During the suspension the student will meet with the teacher to discuss plans for academic success. If course grade(s) is (are) not 65 or above, the suspension will be extended for a second complete cycle of school days (A-F). If course grade(s) still is (are) not 65 or above, student will be suspended for the remainder of the season.
- During the suspension the student-athlete may not suit up for, or sit on the bench during, the games or practices.
- The suspension will be carried over weekends and holidays if necessary.
- Suspension begins the same day that the Athletic Director receives the probationary list from the Assistant Principal for Academics.

Chemical Use Policy – Taken directly from “Student Handbook”

This policy is based on the Mercy High School philosophy, which recognizes that the responsibility for our students’ spiritual and personal growth is shared among students, parents, faculty, and administration. It is additionally based on the convictions that school must be a drug-free environment and that possession, use, or abuse of illegal substances, and alcohol are against the law. We believe with early intervention, the abuse of mind-altering substances is a treatable illness. Effective identification of drug problems coincides with consistent, progressive consequences incurred for violations of our school’s chemical use policy. Therefore, violations of the chemical use policy incur simultaneous disciplinary action and referral to the student’s counselor, emphasizing Mercy’s enforcement of our code of conduct and our commitment to help troubled students.

The guidance department provides school based, short-term educational counseling and referral services for students and their families. A referral to our guidance department, in coordination with disciplinary action, is made to address any incident involving the use of drugs as stated in this policy.

Following New York State Law, smoking is not permitted anywhere on a school campus. Disciplinary and referral measures as stated in this policy are in response to the use of ANY drug, including, but not limited to, nicotine and alcohol. This policy also refers to misused prescription or over-the-counter drugs, illegal drugs (including steroids), look-alike drugs, pills or other substances, which are misrepresented and sold or distributed as restricted or illegal drugs, or products misused for the purpose of mind-altering effect (aerosols, solvents, etc.).

The following actions involving alcohol, illegal drugs and chemicals, or paraphernalia associated with their use will incur consequences:

1. Attempting to secure or purchase.
2. Using or having used.
3. Possessing.
4. Intending to, or attempting to, sell or distribute.
5. Selling or distributing.
6. Being knowingly present when used, possessed, or consumed.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CHEMICAL USE VIOLATIONS BY STUDENTS:

First Offense: Punishment will range from a minimum of one detention and three demerits to dismissal from Our Lady of Mercy High School, depending on the severity of the situation; referral to the student’s counselor, notification of parents, and, if necessary, legal authorities.

Students involved in extracurricular activities, may lose the privilege of some or all activities, depending on the severity of the situation. These include, but are not limited to, loss of student office, loss of participation in student performances, non-attendance at proms, trips, non-participation and non-attendance at athletic games or practices. Seniors may also lose their senior privileges.

Second Offense: A second offense warrants immediate suspension from Our Lady of Mercy High School pending the completion of a drug evaluation from an authorized agency, notification of parents, and, if necessary, legal authorities. A meeting with the school administration, student, her parents and counselor will be held to review the drug evaluation and the student's re-entry to school, or dismissal depending on the severity of the situation.

While on suspension, students may not participate in any extra-curricular activities. As stated above, students involved in any extra-curricular activity "must be in good academic and disciplinary standing in order to participate in proms, trips, plays, and athletics or serve as a student officer" (Student Handbook). Depending on the severity of the situation, students may forfeit their right to continue in such activities.

The "Chemical Use Policy" is in effect at all times, on and off campus, during the school year and on breaks. Remember, under the age of 21, the purchase and use of alcohol and other drugs is against NYS Law. Other laws also apply to parents and those of legal age when dealing with alcohol and drug provision to minors. Know the law and please obey.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

DISCIPLINE FOR CHEMICAL USE VIOLATIONS BY ATHLETES:

Chemical Use/Abuse directly impacts athletic performance and team performance. Disciplinary action for athletes may be taken separately from, or in addition to, actions taken by the school administration, at the discretion of the principal, athletic director and coaches.

In-Season, Non-School Competition

Opportunities exist for Mercy students to play in other youth programs in Rochester. As discussed in the philosophy, JV and Varsity sports at Mercy require a considerable time commitment. The student/athlete may have to decide where her true commitment lies. If there is a conflict between a Mercy athletic team and the outside organization, the Mercy team should come first.

Physical Education Exemption

Junior and senior student-athletes may exempt themselves out of **one quarter** of physical education in each of their junior and senior years of interscholastic athletic competition. The exemption may **not** take place in the second quarter, and must coincide with their participation in a varsity sport season (e.g. soccer: first quarter; basketball: third quarter; softball: fourth quarter.) They will receive their quarter grades for PE from the varsity coach who has supervised their participation, and will be based on the attendance, participation, and skills rubric developed by the PE department.

Sports Booster Club

The Mercy Sports Booster Club seeks membership from all families involved in interscholastic athletics. Members join with a minimum donation and promise some volunteer service. It is the primary goal of the Boosters to raise funds to help offset the expenses of the interscholastic athletic program and to help provide new and/or replacement equipment and uniforms for each of the sports programs. The Boosters hold monthly meetings (usually on the second Monday of each month) in the Mercy Board Room. All parent members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Varsity Letters

In the course of a student athlete's career at Mercy, she has the opportunity to earn a varsity letter for participation on a varsity team. It is at the discretion of the varsity coach as to which members are to receive letters after each season. A student will receive **one** large varsity letter for the first sport in which a letter is earned. Thereafter an athlete will receive sport pins for each sport, and each year, in which she earns a subsequent letter.

Section V Sportsmanship Policy

Learn and understand the rules of your sport. Play hard, play to win, but play fairly within the rules. Do not allow your temper to distract you from the fundamentals of good sportsmanship. Maintain self-control. Respect your opponent. Never taunt. Congratulate her at a game's end. Acknowledge good play. Respect integrity and judgment of officials. Never question the decision of an official. Be an example for your school, teammates and opponents. A player who is disqualified from a contest for unsportsmanlike behavior by an official is prohibited from playing in the next regularly scheduled contest/game. A player who strikes or otherwise physically assaults an official will be subject to an extended suspension from athletic competition. A physical confrontation with an official is any incident in which a player either strikes, bumps, or otherwise physically intimidates an official prior to, during, or after a contest or game.

Key Elements of Good Sportsmanship

Role Models:

- Positive role-modeling by coaches
- Positive parental support
- Proper peer modeling

Courtesy:

- Mutual respect
- Opponents shaking hands
- Common courtesy
- Respect for opponent
- Fair play
- Positive acknowledge of skill and talent
- Meet opponent at home site promptly

Perspective:

- Remember, it is a game
- Remember, parents, they are kids

Follow Rules:

- Listen to the coach
- Follow directions
- Know rules
- Understand rules

Respect for Authority:

- Refer to officials/coaches as Sir or Madam
- Support decisions of coaches, officials, and players