



# **2018-2019 ATHLETIC HANDBOOK MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL**

JASON BUCKLEY  
TARA MAGER  
TARA MAGER  
LORI BUCKLEY

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR  
MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
SUPERINTENDENT  
SPORT'S BOOSTERS PRESIDENT

643-5858  
643-7231  
643-7231  
395-5492

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of the Merrill Athletic Department is to provide student-athletes with an opportunity to compete successfully in an athletic program that is an integral part of their educational experience. Win or lose, the Merrill Athletic Department will encourage student-athletes to provide a winning effort, exhibit sportsmanship, and demonstrate respect for all.”

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

- ⇒ To teach good sportsmanship
- ⇒ To teach athletes to display victory humbly and defeat gracefully
- ⇒ To teach the importance of making a commitment
- ⇒ To give athletes the opportunity to develop their physical and mental abilities to the fullest
- ⇒ To stress the importance of athletes doing their best academically and athletically
- ⇒ To teach good health habits through physical training
- ⇒ To teach people to relate to each other and work together for a common goal
- ⇒ To provide the opportunity to gain personal and group recognition
- ⇒ To create school and community involvement towards excellence
- ⇒ To reward athletes, school, and community hard work with a top level athletic program

## **LEAGUE AFFILIATION**

MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL IS A MEMBER OF THE MID-STATES ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE. OTHER MEMBERS INCLUDE:

ASHLEY

BRECKENRIDGE

CARSON CITY CRYSTAL

COLEMAN

MONTABELLA

MT.PLEASANT SACRED HEART

VESTABURG

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT ATHLETES**

- ⇒ Know and adhere to the Merrill High/Middle School Student Handbook
- ⇒ Know and adhere to the athletic code of the school
- ⇒ Exceed all attendance and academic requirements as practical evidence of loyalty to school and team and a proper philosophy of school sponsored athletics
- ⇒ Observe completely all policies regarding conduct, doing so as a duty to school, team, and self
- ⇒ Counsel with the athletic director over questions of eligibility
- ⇒ Practice and play fairly, giving complete effort in all circumstances and credit in victory to teammates and to opponents in defeat
- ⇒ Accept favorable and unfavorable decisions, as well as victory and defeat, with equal grace
- ⇒ Demonstrate respect for opponents and officials before, during, and after contests

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS

- ⇒ Be supportive of all athletes, coaches and school administrators
- ⇒ Support team guidelines and goals
- ⇒ Communicate all concerns about your child's well-being directly to coach. If not resolved, contact the athletic director. Playing time **cannot** be discussed, playing time is given at the coach's discretion.
- ⇒ A **24- hour cool down period** will be enforced following all games involving an athlete or team issues. Do not approach a coach or an administrator before the 24 hour rule is met. At this point, a meeting will be set up with coaching staff and concerned parents
- ⇒ If issues can't be resolved, the athletic director will then meet with the coaching staff and concerned parents.
- ⇒ If the superintendent needs to get involved, the athlete may be put on athletic suspension until a resolution is reached. All cases will be treated on an individual basis.
- ⇒ Parents will be expected to display a respectful attitude toward coaches, players, officials, spectators and opponents. This includes making inappropriate social media comments toward coaches, players, and opponent.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Athletes will:

- Attempt to communicate all questions and concerns with the coach in a timely fashion.
- Accept the team rules as established by the coach and the athletic department.
- Come prepared to work at every practice where he/she is physically able.
- Display a respectful attitude towards his/her teammates, coaches, officials, spectators, and opponents at all times.

Parents will:

- Abide by the code of conduct for parents as stated above.
- Be supportive of not only their children, but of all competitors.
- Support team guidelines and goals.

## MERRILL HIGH SCHOOL'S ELIGIBILITY RULES

To be eligible to participate in athletics at Merrill High School a student must adhere to the following standards:

1. Must meet the MHSAA eligibility requirements for the previous semester.
2. **Eligibility policy:** The first week a student receives an E in a subject, the student will receive a Warning. If a student is receiving an E the following week, the student will be given a P for Progress or a NO. Progress is earned by talking to the teacher and meeting the teacher's rubric for progress. A NO will be given if no effort is shown by the student to improve his/her grade. If a student receives two No's in the same week, they are ineligible for that week. The student will remain athletically ineligible until they are passing 5 of 6 classes and showing improvement in the other class which they are still receiving an E. Teacher determines if a student is showing progress by a preapproved rubric.
3. If a student receives an E for 3 consecutive weeks (1 Warnings and 2 No's) in the same class, the student will be marked as ineligible. A NO response may be given for a grade of E in a class, not regularly turning in

homework or for citizenship that is below the acceptable level. Remember – a warning must be given the week prior to giving a No in that class

4. Students can also be given a No in a class for 3 or more missing assignments after receiving a warning. When a student turns missing work in, that student should get a copy of their grade report for that class, have the teacher sign the copy of the grade report and mark the turned in assignments. Turn the report into the athletic director.
5. We really need parents to help with eligibility. It has become an issue the last couple of years. Please use Skyward to stay on top of your kids grades and make sure they are turning homework in. The best day to check grades is Thursday evening. The teachers must have eligibility turned in by 3:00 on Thursdays, so the grade you see Thursday evening is the grade eligibility is determined from. If you do not have a Skyward account set up, please contact the High School Office. If you do not have computer access, your son/daughter has access and can print grade reports off to bring home if you would like them too.
6. If a student receives a NO, it is expected that the teacher will explain in detail what assignments are missing or why the student received a NO.
  - A) The student may also access Skyward to check missing assignments.
7. If a student is ineligible they will not be dismissed from class if the team is departing during school hours.
8. If an athlete receives two No's for the week, the following will be the number of games or days of competition that the student will be ineligible to participate in that week.
  - Baseball – 4 games
  - Basketball – 2 games
  - Cheer-Competitive – 1 day of competition
  - Cheer-Sideline – 1 day of competition
  - Cross Country – 1 day of competition
  - Football – 1 game
  - Golf - 2 days of competition
  - Softball – 4 games
  - Track – 2 days of competition
  - Volleyball – 2 days of competition
  - Wrestling – 2 days of competition

In the weekly eligibility period the following will be in effect:

1. Eligibility forms will be turned in to the athletic department on Thursday. Athletes will be notified of their status on Friday from the athletic department or head coach.
2. Any student found ineligible, will be notified by the Friday prior to the week they will be ineligible. Ineligibility period will be from Sunday to Sunday. Athletes will be informed by the athletic department, administration, or head coach.
3. If the student does not achieve eligibility status the following week, they will stay on the ineligible list.

## **MHSAA ELIGIBILITY RULES**

SEE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

## **SCHOOL DETENTIONS**

The following will pertain to any student athlete receiving detentions.

1. Student athletes in detention cannot leave detention early to participate in practice or a contest.

## **DRESS CODE**

Athletes at Merrill High School should project a favorable image at all times. Head coaches and the athletic department will work together to determine proper dress code. It is expected that athletes will dress appropriately for home and away games

## **INSURANCE**

Merrill Community Schools **does not** provide any type of health or accident insurance for injuries incurred by your child at school. Merrill Community Schools encourages all families to have accident coverage on their children, prior to participation in any sports or school sponsored activity.

## **PAY-TO-PARTICIPATE**

To maintain the athletic programs at Merrill Community Schools a “pay-to-participate” program has been instituted. The funds generated by this program will go directly to support the athletic programs at both the high school and middle school.

The pay-to-participate fee for a high school student is \$70 per sport. A high school student receiving reduced lunch will have a fee of \$45 and a student receiving free lunch will have a fee of \$25. There is a maximum per family fee of \$300. Activities such as the youth football program, middle school, and the AYBT basketball program are not school sponsored/funded. If an athlete plays three sports in a school year, the third sport has a fee of \$50 and reduced lunch will have a fee of \$35 and free lunch will be \$20.

Payment is due when teams are determined or contact must be made by the parent/guardian to the athletic department regarding payment plan. The fee is non-refundable. Please make your check, for the appropriate amount, payable to Merrill Community Schools and submit to the athletic department. Any request for a waiver of the pay sport or family maximum fee must be made in writing and submitted to the athletic director.

## **LOCKER ROOM AND GYM FACILITIES**

- ⇒ The athletes should keep the locker room clean at all times. If something is not right in the locker room, contact the head coach or athletic director. Otherwise, the athlete/team will be held responsible.
- ⇒ Showers are recommended to be taken after each practice and game.
- ⇒ Athletes are not allowed to get training room supplies or keep them in their locker or bag—especially tape unless issued by coach or athletic department
- ⇒ Athletes are not allowed in any office unless given permission.
- ⇒ Athletes are reminded not to bring large sums of money and to lock their lockers during practices and games.
- ⇒ No student is allowed in the gym or weight room unless supervised by authorized personal of the Merrill Community Schools.
- ⇒ Any student found with keys to the school will be permanently suspended from participating in athletics at Merrill High School, unless given to use by coach or athletic department

## **INJURIES**

- ⇒ If an athlete is injured and needs attention, the coach will contact his/her parents.
- ⇒ If necessary the coach or athletic director will call 911.
- ⇒ The coach will report the injury to the athletic director and fill out the proper form for insurance purposes.
- ⇒ If an athlete is seen by a doctor, he/she must have a doctor's written permission to return to participation. Parent notes are not acceptable.
- ⇒ Concussion Return Policy per MHSAA:

New Post-Concussion Return-to-Play Requirement: Starting this fall, in addition to the written clearance from an MD, DO, PA or NP, signatures are now also required of both students and their parents/guardians before the student can return to activity. It is also required that the Return to Activity & Post-Concussion Consent Form be emailed or faxed to the MHSAA and kept on file at the school for seven years following a student's high school graduation. The same form signed by the medical professional must then be signed by the student and parent before the student may return to activity. Students who participate without the required approvals are ineligible athletes.

In no instances should a coach make a medical decision to allow an athlete to return to activity after a serious illness or injury without doctor permission.

## **BLOOD DONATION POLICY**

It is recommended that student - athletes who have practice on the day of a blood drive give blood before 10:00 a.m. Athletes will be encouraged to **not** give blood on the day of a contest. Any athlete that does decide to give blood on the day of a contest will be subject to less playing time or not be allowed to play at all depending on how the athlete feels. The health of the athlete is the top priority.

## **ATHLETES PLAYING TWO SPORTS PER SEASON**

Students must have a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.7 or higher to be eligible to participate in 2 sports per season. Athletes must have approval of both coaches and must pick a primary sport. Two sport athletic forms are available in the Athletic Director's office.

## **EQUIPMENT**

- ⇒ All athletes shall be protected by safe equipment and shall at all times strive to be neat and clean.
- ⇒ Athletes shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment checked out to them.
- ⇒ Any athlete who has any school equipment in his/her possession that does not belong to him/her shall forfeit it immediately to the coach requesting it. Any student who has failed to return, in good condition, any equipment issued shall be ineligible for an award and from participation in any other sport until such equipment is satisfactorily returned or the Athletic Department is reimbursed.
- ⇒ The theft of school equipment is larceny and Michigan law regards larceny as a felony.
- ⇒ Any equipment (even if purchased by the coach) not returned by an athlete must be paid for. The coach must adhere to the following procedure:
  1. Notify the athlete to turn in his/her equipment.
  2. If step one is unsuccessful, make up a list of athletes who have not turned in their equipment and give a copy to the athletic director within one week of the final contest.

Any athlete turning in equipment must turn it in to his/her coach on the assigned day. The athletic director will assign another day for those who cannot make the first date. Any athlete paying for lost equipment must pay in the office of the athletic director. The athlete will be given a receipt of the payment.

## EXCUSING ATHLETES FROM CLASS

- ⇒ The athletic director will submit a list of all athletes to be excused for a given contest to the teachers that day. At no time will athletes be excused from class for practice.
- ⇒ Athletes will be excused 10 minutes before the time the bus is to leave for an away contest.
- ⇒ The athletic department sets bus departure time with assistance from coaches.

## TRYOUTS

All eligible students must be offered the opportunity to try out for an athletic team. There must be a minimum of three days of tryouts or practices before any cuts are made. The coach will clearly explain the standards upon which the team will be selected prior to the first practice.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

- ⇒ Students are to be on time and present during the total school day in order to participate in athletic practices or events during the same day or evening.
- ⇒ Should there be a situation whereby a student cannot attend school who would normally receive an excused absence, the student will be allowed to participate in the contest with the approval of the building principal or athletic director
- ⇒ In these cases a prearranged excuse is required. Examples of excused absences are funerals, doctor's appointments, therapy sessions, court appointments, etc. Parent/student/guardian must provide documentation for such appointments for it to be considered an excused absence.
- ⇒ Athletes must be in regular attendance at all practice sessions called by the coach. Athletes absent or suspended from school may not participate in practice, game or be present at school. Athletes have the responsibility to notify their coach when they will be absent from practice with a specific reason.
- ⇒ Athletes are to be in school when school begins on the morning following a previous night's contest or a morning practice. Coaches should impress this on their athletes. **SCHOOL COMES FIRST.**

## BUS RULES

- ⇒ Athletes will not board the bus until the coach is present. Everyone will board the bus together. No bus will leave unless the coach or a chaperon is on the bus.
- ⇒ No food or drink will be allowed on the bus unless the bus driver grants prior permission. The coach and his/her players are in charge of cleaning up the bus following any trip.
- ⇒ Athletes are to remain in their seats when on the bus. This means no walking around, standing up and banging on the ceiling, hanging any obscene gestures from inside the bus. Profanity will not be tolerated.
- ⇒ **Parents must sign out their son/daughter with the coach prior to taking them home from a contest. Athletes must have pre-approval from the principal or the athletic department prior to riding home with another parent.**

## SNOW DAY PROCEDURES

1. If school is called off during the school day:
  - a. No team practices, unless cleared by the administration (Varsity levels only)
  - b. If a varsity team wants to practice, varsity only may practice after safety and team arrangements have been considered. No middle school, freshman or junior varsity sports may practice.
2. If school is called off before the start of the day.
  - a. Varsity teams may practice if cleared by the administration.
  - b. All sub-varsity teams will not practice
3. If school is called off on the following day, all teams will have the opportunity to practice if cleared by the administration.

## TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- ⇒ All athletes must participate in **10 days** of conditioning before they may play in any contests.
- ⇒ Once an athlete has decided upon a sport he/she wishes to try, he/she may not change to another sport without permission from the coach for the sport he/she is dropping.
- ⇒ If an athlete is dropped from a team for disciplinary reasons, he/she is not allowed to try out for another sport during the same season.
- ⇒ Athletes must travel to contests with the team on the bus, unless prior approval is given by the athletic department. In the event that a parent wants an athlete to return with them, that parent must inform and sign the appropriate form with the coach.
- ⇒ Athletes must have prior signed approval from the athletic department to be transported home by an authorized adult other than their parent/guardian.
- ⇒ During school disciplinary suspension, student/athletes are also suspended from participation in any kind of extracurricular activities, including athletic practices and contests. A suspension runs until midnight of the last day suspended.
- ⇒ During athletic suspension, an athlete still participates in all practice sessions, attends all games with the team, but cannot dress or participate in games.

## EARNING A VARSITY LETTER

For an athlete to receive a varsity letter, the athlete must be a **member** of the varsity team of that sport for a minimum of the following:

Baseball/ Softball- 12 games (6 DH)  
Basketball – 8 games  
Competitive Cheer- 2 Invitations  
Cross Country- 2 meets  
Football- 4 games

Golf- 4 matches  
Sideline Cheer- 4 games  
Track- 3 meets  
Wrestling- 4 matches  
Volleyball- 4 games



## **TEAM RULES AND POLICIES**

Individual coaches may have additional team rules and policies necessary for the administration of their sport. The athletic director will have pre-approved all such rules. These rules must be in writing and given to the athletes.

## **ATHLETIC TRAINING RULES**

All disciplinary action for violation of Merrill High School athletic training rules begin as a freshman and accrue through your senior year.

It is important to understand that these training rules are in effect **for all four years of high school, 12 months a year/24 hours a day** and violations are cumulative throughout a student/athletes career. If, for example, an athlete is found guilty of possessing alcohol, drugs or have a criminal matter or arrested during his/her freshman year, that athlete will not be allowed to participate in 20% of the contests for the sport that he/she is involved in or 20-40% of the next sport if the incident occurs before the official beginning of the season (1<sup>st</sup> offense). If that same athlete is found to possess alcohol, drugs, criminal matter, or arrested during his/her senior year, that athlete will be removed from 40-60% of contests for that sport (2<sup>nd</sup> offense).

Rules pertaining to the commission of a crime, use and/or possession of illegal weapons, alcoholic beverages, drugs, smoking, and chewing tobacco.

Consequences for violating rules pertaining to the commission of a crime, use and/or possession of illegal weapons, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, steroids or tobacco substances:

**First offense:** Suspension from sports for 40% (2/5) of the contests or competitions in the current season and/ or the next season of competition. **Alternative Penalty:** The student/parent may choose a 20% loss of the contests or competitions plus 20 hours of community service to be completed before the student may resume competition.

On the First offense only – If a student “self-reports” a violation of the athletic rules pertaining to use or possession, he/she will incur one half of the normal punishment for the first offense.

**Second offense:** Suspension from sports for 60% (3/5) of the contests or competitions in the current season and/ or the next season of competition. **Alternative Penalty:** The student/parent may choose a 40% loss of the contests or competitions plus 40 hours of community service to be completed before the student may resume competition.

**Third offense:** Suspension from all sports for one calendar year. If one calendar year passes without any participation in a sport, the suspension for an activity code violation is negated.

**Fourth offense:** Suspension from participation in all arranged sports at Merrill High School for remainder of the athlete’s high school career.

NOTE: A scrimmage with another school may not count as a scheduled interscholastic competition.

NOTE: A student suspended from interscholastic competitions must continue to

demonstrate the qualities of sportsmanship outlined in this Handbook.

NOTE: If a suspension cannot be completed in the present season, the suspension will be carried over to the student's next sports season. The amount of dates to be suspended will be determined by the Athletic Director.

NOTE: Offense for steroid use: Any student suspected of steroid use will be required to submit to a drug test. Failure to take or pass this test will cause removal from the team for the balance of the season. Any further participation in high school athletics must be approved by the Athletic Director.

NOTE: Suspensions from athletic violations assessed by other school districts will be carried over to Merrill High School for transferring students.

NOTE: Actions displayed on the internet including Facebook, text messages and phones are considered a source of evidence in determining a violation of the handbook.

NOTE: For a suspension to be fulfilled the athlete must finish the season of the sport he/she is participating in. Otherwise the suspension will carry over to the next season.

Violation must be reported to the athletic director. The evidence must prove that a violation was committed. Circumstantial evidence is not enough.

The Athletic Board of Review will set all suspension dates.

NOTE: A student may only serve the suspension in a sport he/she has completed in the past or must complete the entire season in a new sport. Failure to complete the season where the suspension is assessed will require that the suspension to be served in full during their next sport season.

## **MERRILL ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

As representatives of the Merrill Community Schools, athletes are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at ALL TIMES. This standard applies to both school and community activities, in and out of uniform, on and off school property.

### **AFTER SCHOOL POLICY**

1. Students who are staying after school waiting to attend a sporting practice must either go home or make arrangements with another team member to find a way to return for practices. Students will not be allowed to stay after school unless they are here for instructional support/assistance.
2. Students in the building at 3:30 will be given a detention.

During Middle School sporting events Girls Volleyball, Basketball, Boys Basketball, the athletes must stay with their coaches or an area supervised by a coach during the events. Spectators must pay for entrance to the event and stay in the gym/lobby area. Students will not be allowed to go back to their lockers once school is dismissed, all materials must be taken from lockers at the end of the day.

## **STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK FORM**

This handbook contains the Merrill High School Athletic rules, codes, and policies that apply to athletes and has been adopted by the Board of Education. The material has been prepared for the use of Merrill Athletes and their parents. Athletes and parents are asked to read the regulations and sign the form below. The page should be returned to the coach as evidence of the fact that both athlete and parents are aware of the rules and regulations contained in this document. The undersigned parent (guardian) and student athlete understand that any information dealing with arrest, detention or investigation of said student in regard to any criminal matter will be communicated to appropriate school officials.

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ATHLETE SIGNATURE

DATE

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PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE