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**Columbia Public Schools
Middle School Athletic Handbook**

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Welcome to CPS Middle School Activities

Welcome to the CPS Athletic Programs! We are excited that you have chosen to participate in one of our fine co-curricular activities. Research shows that involvement in school programs, including co-curricular activities, increases academic and social adjustment for students. Many of the character traits required to be successful participants are exactly those that will promote a successful life after middle school. We hope the information provided within this handbook makes both your student's and your experience with the CPS Activity/Athletic Programs less stressful and more enjoyable.

CPS encourages you to take advantage of as many opportunities as your time and talent will permit. CPS does not encourage specialization in one sport or activity; rather, we would encourage you to experience a variety of sports as well as other school activities. We support you as you strive to grow emotionally, mentally, socially, and physically through our activities and athletics.

Athletic Program Goal

The goal of the CPS Middle School Athletic Program is to provide experiences that will help students acquire additional knowledge and skills as well as the attributes of good citizenship.

Athletic Program Philosophy

We believe that student participation in CPS activity/athletic programs is a privilege which carries with it responsibilities to the school, activity, student body, community, and to self. Athletic participation represents a year-round commitment that will help to develop the student physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Athletic Commitment

We believe that school activities outside of the regular school day enhance the education of each student. We encourage you to commit yourself to being the best you can be both in and out of the classroom. As a student-athlete, you are in school to secure the best education you are capable of achieving. If the value of activities is to be achieved, certain responsibilities are expected of the student.

Since you are in the public eye, your personal conduct always must be above reproach; you have an obligation to create a favorable image and gain the respect of your teammates, the student body, and the CPS community. You are also expected to strive to achieve sound citizenship and desirable social traits including: emotional control, honesty, cooperation, dependability, and respect for others and their abilities. You are also expected to maintain academic citizenship and eligibility standards as established by the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) and CPS Schools.

CPS Middle School Athletic Programs:

Football (8th grade only)
Girls Volleyball (8th grade only)
Boys and Girls Basketball (7th and 8th grade teams)
Boys and Girls Track (7th and 8th grade teams)
Cheerleading

*Intramurals will be offered for 6th grade students in a variety of sports

Academic Expectations

Students who participate in athletic programs at CPS are required to be in favorable academic standing in order to be eligible. Students must be passing all classes in order to maintain their eligibility for participation. If a student-athlete is determined to be failing a class(es), they will immediately be held out of all practices and contests until all grades are brought back up to a passing score. Once this occurs, they immediately regain their eligibility and are allowed to continue their participation in that sport.

Citizenship Expectations

Students who represent a school in interscholastic activities must be credible citizens. Those students whose character or conduct is such as to reflect discredit upon themselves or their school are not considered "credible citizens." Conduct shall be satisfactory in accordance with the standards of good discipline [MSHSAA By-law 2.2, Citizenship Requirements].

Credible citizens are:

1. Students who adhere to the CPS chemical use and possession policy.
2. Students who do not attend parties where minors possess or use alcohol and/or possess or use non-prescriptive drugs.
3. Students who are in good standing with the judicial and/or legal system.
4. Students who are not under school suspension as a result of disciplinary consequences.
5. Students who choose not to be present where illegal activities are occurring.

Each individual school and/or coach has the authority to set more restrictive citizenship standards and shall have the authority to judge its students under those standards [MSHSAA By-law 2.2, Citizenship Requirements].

CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Students who represent a school in interscholastic activities must be creditable citizens and judged so by the proper authority. Those students whose character or conduct is such as to reflect discredit upon themselves or their schools are not considered "creditable citizens." Conduct shall be satisfactory in accord with the standards of good discipline.

a. Law Enforcement: A student who commits an act for which charges may be or have been filed by law enforcement authorities under any municipal ordinance, misdemeanor or felony statute shall not be eligible until all proceedings with the legal system have been concluded and any penalty (i.e. restitution, community service, counseling, etc.) has been satisfied. If law enforcement authorities determine that charges will not be filed, eligibility will be contingent upon local school policies. Moving traffic offenses shall not affect eligibility, unless they involve drugs, alcohol, or injuries to others. After a student has completed all court appearances and penalties, and has satisfied all special conditions of probation and remains under general probation only, local school authorities shall determine eligibility.

b. School:

1. A student who violates a local school policy is ineligible until completion of the prescribed school penalties.
2. The eligibility of a student who is serving detention or in-school suspension shall be determined by local authorities.
3. A student shall not be considered eligible while *servicing an out-of-school* suspension.
4. A student who is expelled or who withdraws from school because of disciplinary measures shall not be considered eligible for 365 days from the date of expulsion or withdrawal.
5. If a student misses class(es) without being excused by the principal, the student shall not be considered eligible on that date unless they attend at least half of the school day. Further, the student cannot be certified eligible for participation for any subsequent date until the student attends at least a half day of classes.
6. Each individual school has the authority to set more restrictive citizenship standards and shall have the authority *and responsibility* to judge its students under those standards.
7. Each school shall diligently and completely investigate any issue that could affect student eligibility.
8. Students must maintain an overall average citizenship score on their IPR as determined by their school or face possible suspension of contests/practices.

CPS Citizenship Violation Consequences

Non-credible citizenship may result in disciplinary action. These actions may include parental contact, one-on-one conferences, extra athletic conditioning, benching, non-participation in interscholastic games, and/or a percentage of the interscholastic season withheld. Ultimately, removal from participation and/or the team can occur. A student shall not be considered eligible while under suspension. Students/parents should have written citizenship expectations and consequences from those CPS coaches who have set more restrictive standards per MSHSAA by law 2.2 and the CPS Middle School Citizenship Expectations policy.

Conflict Resolution

When observing improper behavior or problems with individual team/squad members, the best solutions are ones that address a problem at the time it is observed or occurs. Students should practice the following two-step method.

1. Talk to the person (one-on-one) about what she/he is doing and why the offending behavior should be stopped.
2. If the problem is not solved, consult the staff advisor/coach. It is best to stop the problem immediately by handling it informally on a person-to-person level while it is still a small matter. Do not let unresolved problems turn into a clash that will harm team unity.

Student Accountability for Equipment

In order to give students a sense of responsibility and an appreciation of their equipment, student-athletes will be held accountable for the abuse or loss of it. **ANY EQUIPMENT LOST OR STOLEN MUST BE PAID FOR BY THE STUDENT IN WHOSE NAME IT WAS ISSUED.**

Adherence to the following guidelines will reduce the chances for lost or stolen equipment.

1. Do not exchange or loan any of the equipment checked out to you to another teammate. If exchange is warranted, clear it on your checkout card by having the coach make the adjustments.
2. Any loss of equipment should be reported immediately to the head coach, rather than waiting until the end of the season.
3. Any protective equipment that does not fit properly or that has any defective parts should be reported to a coach immediately. Do not wear the equipment until the necessary adjustments have been made. This is for your protection.
4. No equipment may be checked out to an athlete in any sport if the athlete owes equipment or fees to a previous sport.
5. Students must sign for items checked out.
6. Students must pay in full for items requiring payment before that item will be issued.
7. Student participants/athletes may not compete interscholastically if equipment or fines are owed to another activity or sport.
8. It is against MSHSAA regulations to wear, use, or be seen in official school uniforms unless involved directly in a school-sponsored event or interscholastic contest. Therefore, any school uniforms seen being worn outside of the above participation guidelines is a MSHSAA violation and should be reported to a coach or the athletic/activity department. The SMS athletic and activity departments adhere strictly to these regulations.

Interscholastic Behavior Guidelines

All players, coaches/advisors, parents, and other fans attending any CPS Middle School contest are expected to:

1. Maintain pride for self and school.

2. Strive to keep high standards of conduct.
3. Not sit on the front row of the bleachers. No standing is allowed on the field house floor.
4. Sit in the bleachers. Continuous standing is allowed in designated areas only.
5. Refrain from use of profanity or implied profanity.
6. Not engage in disrespectful chants, including personal remarks directed at players and officials.
7. Not single-out players by number or name.
8. Not display disrespectful behaviors to other fans, players, or cheerleaders.
9. CHEER FOR YOUR OWN TEAM-NOT AGAINST THE OTHER TEAM!
10. Be a credible citizen at all times.
11. Abide by the R-7 Board Policy prohibiting the use of tobacco products inside the building or outside on any school or athletic grounds.

Sportsmanship Philosophy

The Columbia Public School District is a member of the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA). As members of this organization, we adhere to policies set down for the display of good sportsmanship by athletes, students, fans, parents, and patrons. Member schools are expected to enforce sportsmanship rules for their own schools, players, and spectators.

Sportsmanship Policy

All players, coaches/advisors, parents, and other fans are expected to:

1. Emphasize the proper ideal of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fairness.
2. Eliminate all possibilities that tend to destroy the best values of the activity. Hazing and initiations are not acceptable or condoned on or off school grounds.
3. Stress the values derived from participating fairly.
4. Show cordial courtesy to officials, visitors, and each other.
5. Establish a courteous relationship between visitors and hosts.
6. Respect the integrity and judgment of coaches/advisors, judges, and officials.
7. Achieve a thorough understanding and acceptance of the rules and expectations of the activity and the standards of eligibility.
8. Encourage leadership, use of initiative, and good judgment by the participants in the activity.
9. Recognize that the purpose of activities is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social, and emotional well-being of the individual participants.
10. Promote good school citizenship standards and use them as a barometer for participation.

All school discipline policies and rules apply directly to CPS Middle School students at school activities whether they are held on school property or away from school. **Non-credible citizenship may result in disciplinary action or removal from participation.**

According to the Missouri State High School Activities Association By-Law 710:

A school may be suspended from membership in the MSHSAA and from participating in interscholastic activities with other member schools for the unsportsmanlike conduct of teams,

coaches, students, and fans. Each school is responsible for the conduct of its teams, coaches, students, and fans at games both at home and away. Please support the players in a positive manner rather than possibly placing them in a position of being penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in the spirit of middle school athletics.

Anti-Hazing Policy

Hazing is defined as, including, but not necessarily limited to, any action or situation created, whether on or off school premises, which might reasonably be expected to result in mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. This definition includes the following activities; but is not limited to:

- Paddling
- Creation of excessive fatigue
- Physical and psychological shocks
- Requiring or encouraging the wearing of apparel in public that is conspicuous and normally not considered in good taste
- Public ridicule of students, including morally degrading or humiliating games and activities
- Late work sessions, excessive time demands, or other requirements that interfere with academic performance
- Demanding or encouraging any other activities that conflict with civil law and/or school policies

Disciplinary consequences will occur to anyone or any team found to be guilty of hazing.

According to Missouri State statutes "consent" to hazing is not a defense.

Chemical Use/Possession Policy

Philosophy:

CPS recognizes that the use and/or possession of tobacco and mood-altering chemicals is a significant health problem for adolescents, resulting in negative effects on behavior, learning, and the total development of each individual. The possession or use of tobacco and mood-altering chemicals, such as alcohol, drugs, marijuana, etc., by adolescents affects extracurricular participation and the development of related skills.

Statement of Purpose:

1. To recognize and elevate the physical and emotional potential of students in a positive manner, and encourage the growth of these students in an atmosphere of responsible citizenship.

2. To emphasize the school's concern for maintaining and improving the health and safety of students while participating in activities.
3. To promote his/her awareness of the long-term physical and emotional effects of chemical use on health.
4. To promote equity and a sense of order and discipline among students.
5. To confirm and support existing state laws that restrict the use of chemicals.
6. To establish and promote high standards of conduct for those students who are leaders and standard bearers among their peers.
7. To assist students who desire to resist peer pressure that directs them toward the use of chemicals.
8. To provide prevention guidelines for chemical abuse in the activity programs for students and staff advisors of CPS.
9. **The expectation of the Columbia Public School District is that credible citizenship is to be a yearlong commitment. Non-credible citizenship could result in disciplinary action or removal from participation.**

Objectives:

To establish a prevention program that includes penalty guidelines, as well as, assurance that fair treatment is received for the action. The three major components of fair treatment are:

1. Certainty — enforcement of consequences will follow the violation.
2. Severity — fair penalty for the act.
3. Celerity — promptness of the process; must be immediate.

Consequences for Chemical Abuse

Credible citizenship is a year-round responsibility. The following rule includes the school year, summer, and season of practice, play, or rehearsal:

*Regardless of quantity, a student shall not use or possess tobacco; have in possession or use a beverage containing alcohol; use or consume, have in possession, buy, sell, or give away **illegal drugs or chemicals**, or any substance defined by law as a drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor; or use or be in possession of drug paraphernalia. The use of prescribed or non-prescribed performance-enhancing products is greatly discouraged by the Columbia Public School District.*

The use of each type of chemical can adversely affect the student on a short- or long-term basis. Chemical substances are defined as tobacco, alcohol, mood-altering chemicals, and drug paraphernalia.

The following are minimum guidelines that shall be applied for the violation of the chemical abuse rules. Each coach/sponsor shall have the option of assigning additional penalties for any violation.

First Violation Penalty:

Following confirmation of the violation, the student loses eligibility to participate in the next match/contest(s) that occur in a consecutive, chronological sequence. The student/athlete

shall be ineligible for interscholastic competition and may not participate for a minimum of 40% of his/her competitive season. The matches/contests cannot be selected. The student must meet all other team obligations as defined by the coach/advisor of that activity.

Second Violation Penalty:

The student shall be ineligible for 365 days, beginning with the date of the violation.

Violations occurring at the end of the season, off-season, or during the summer:

The loss of eligibility carries over to the next season in which the student/athlete participates. For example: If a student commits a violation during the last contest of the season, he/she loses eligibility (as per the consequence of the category involved) in the next season of participation. The 40% formula will be reworked per the next season of participation.

Commitment Form Policy

Prior to participating in any practice or tryout sessions for any interscholastic sport/event, each athlete/participant and parent must return the "CPS District Activity/Athletic Commitment Form" found on the last page of this handbook. Parents and participants should read completely the policies and information in the activity/athletic handbook. Parents and students must both sign off on the commitment form. The signed form is a contractual understanding between students/parents/coaches/sponsors of the following requirements for participation.

1. MSHSAA physical and personal medical insurance is provided (if applicable).
2. Participation in athletics and activities is voluntary and a privilege.
3. The handbook has been read, discussed, and questions answered in regard to the document.
4. Participants will follow the school district policies and comply with the requirements listed in the handbook.
5. Parents will support the middle school in its efforts to promote good citizenship and the requirements listed in the handbook.
6. The commitment form must be completed for each school year. Only one commitment form needs to be on file per participant.

PARENT INFORMATION

Communications and Parent/Coach Relationship:

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, everyone is better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to students. As parents, when your student becomes involved in a program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your student. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your student's program. Coaches and parents are expected to encourage and praise students in their attempt to improve themselves as students, athletes, and citizens. Parents can facilitate this by gaining an understanding and appreciation of all aspects of the sport/activity and the expectations placed on your student.

Communication That Coaches/Staff Advisors Expect From Parents:

1. Concerns should be expressed directly to the coach/staff advisor.
 2. Notification of any schedule conflicts should be shared well in advance.
 3. An appointment should be scheduled to discuss any specific concern in regard to a coach's/staff advisor's philosophy and/or expectations if there is ever a question.
- Parents and coaches should help their students learn that success is achieved in the development of a skill and should make student-athletes feel good about themselves, regardless of the outcome of any contest. As your students become involved in the programs in the CPS schools, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your students wish. If you, as a parent, have a concern, take time to talk with coaches in an appropriate manner, including proper time and place, being sure to follow the designated chain of command. At these times, discussion with the coach/advisor is encouraged.

Communications You Should Expect From Your Student's Coach/Staff Advisor:

1. Philosophy of the coach/staff advisor.
2. Expectations the coach/staff advisor has for your student as well as for all the students involved in the activity.
3. Location and times of all practices and contests.
4. Team requirements, i.e. fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
5. Procedure should your student be injured during participation.
6. Discipline that could result in the denial of your student's participation.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches/Staff Advisors:

1. The treatment of your student mentally and physically.
 2. Ways to help your student improve.
 3. Concerns about your student's behavior.
- Sometimes it is very difficult to accept your student not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches/staff advisors are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain area can be and should be discussed with your student's coach/staff advisor. Other aspects, such as those listed next, must be left to the discretion of the coach/staff advisor.

Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches/Staff Advisors:

1. Playing time.
 2. Team strategy.
 3. Play calling.
 4. Other student-athletes/participants.
- There are situations that may require a conference between the coach/staff advisor and the parent. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. Everyone involved is expected to be respectful, to

recognize and show appreciation for the other's role, and to reinforce the school's "Student Activity/Athletic Code of Conduct" plus the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

If You Have a Concern to Discuss with a Coach/Staff Advisor, the Following Procedure Should Be Followed:

1. Call to set up an appointment with the coach/staff advisor. Please do not attempt to confront a coach/staff advisor before, during, or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach/staff advisor. Meetings of this nature usually do not promote resolution. What Can a Parent Do if the Meeting with the Coach/Staff Advisor Did Not Provide a Satisfactory Resolution?
2. Call and set up an appointment with the Activities Director/Administrator to discuss the situation. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.

Competitive Program Selection

1. Coaches/sponsors are hired by the school district to be responsible for establishing criteria for selection with input from their staff. This may be a highly subjective process. Selection and decisions regarding game/performance situations are the sole responsibility of this staff.
2. At times, there are limited opportunities for students due to school size and the competitive nature of middle school athletics/activities. While this is not our desire, it is a reality. It is extremely difficult for coaches/sponsors to tell young people they will not be placed on the team/performance group for which they want to participate, or that they have not made any team/performance group at all. All students, regardless of their grade in school, should understand that these are real possibilities.
3. If selected, a student should be prepared to accept their role on their team whatever it may be and complete the season in good standing. Parents should also prepare themselves for this and accept the coach's/sponsor's decisions.
4. The main goal of any level of competitive athletics/activities is to put the most talented members of any team/performance group in competition to win the contests. Starting positions and playing time are not guaranteed to anyone. The goal of middle school athletics is to develop student-athletes and prepare them for high school competition. Each member of a team/performance group is valuable to the team's/performance group's overall progress. Some members may play a great deal of the time in a contest while others may not play what a parent would consider "significant playing time." Regardless of time spent in actual competition, simply by being part of a team/performance group, a student can learn many valuable lessons such as: sportsmanship, working together to meet team/performance group goals, commitment, placing team/performance group above self, learning to accept instruction and criticism, respect for others, winning and losing with dignity, and being responsible for one's own actions.

**CPS MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC
COMMITMENT FORM
(2013-2014)**

PARTICIPANT'S NAME (*PRINT*) _____ SCHOOL YEAR _____

PLEASE LIST ALL ACTIVITIES OR SPORTS on line below:

Prior to participating in any practice or tryout sessions for any interscholastic sport, each athlete must:

- Successfully pass a physical examination by a registered physician or other authorized health care provider, and the copy of such examination must be on file in the office of the building athletic director. The physical exam is valid if issued on or after February 1 of the previous school year.
- Return the Activity/Athletic Commitment Form properly signed.
- Provide proof of personal health insurance. _____
- Have parent and student signature. (*Company Name/Policy #*)

As a school's student-athlete participating voluntarily in interscholastic athletics, I verify that:

1. I have reviewed the information and understand what the CPS School District expects from me in regards to sportsmanship, citizenship, scholastics, and staying free from drug/alcohol/tobacco use while enrolled in this school. I understand the consequences for breaking school policy, and I will not do so while a CPS School district student participant. **I understand that this is a year-round commitment.** I will be responsible for all equipment issued to me throughout the season, will return such equipment at the conclusion of the season, and will pay the current replacement cost for any of the equipment not accounted for by me at the end of the season.
2. I acknowledge that I have been properly advised, cautioned, and warned by administrative and coaching personnel of the school district that I am exposing myself to the risk of injury, including but not limited to, the risk of sprains, fractures and ligament and/or cartilage damage which could result in a temporary or permanent, partial, or complete impairment in the use of my limbs; brain damage; paralysis; or even death. Having been so cautioned and warned, it is still my desire to participate in sports and to do so with full knowledge and understanding of the risk of injury.
3. I, along with my parents, certify that I have reviewed, understand, and will follow all of the school district policies in the activity/athletic handbook. In order to be eligible for participation, I understand I must comply with all requirements listed.

CPS Citizenship Violation Consequences. Non-credible citizenship may result in disciplinary action. These actions may include parental contact, one-on-one conferences, extra athletic conditioning, benching, non-participation in interscholastic games, and/or a percentage of the interscholastic season withheld. **Ultimately**, removal from participation and/or the team can occur. A student shall not be considered eligible while under suspension.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

As a parent/guardian of a student participating voluntarily in interscholastic athletic/activities, I have reviewed the information, discussed it with my son/daughter, and will support the high school in its efforts to promote good citizenship.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

****Please note: Coaches or sponsors may have additional policies other than what is listed in the handbook and will provide this information to each student/athlete and parent.**