

NMCS ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

1.0 NMCS MISSION STATEMENT, ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY AND MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (M.H.S.A.A.) ATHLETIC CODE FOR ATHLETES

Northern Michigan Christian School Mission Statement

“Northern Michigan Christian School exists to educate God’s children by challenging minds, nurturing hearts, and developing gifts for service in Christ’s Kingdom.”

Northern Michigan Christian School Athletic Philosophy

“The interscholastic athletic program of Northern Michigan Christian School should be an integral part of the total school program. Athletics should never be thought of as being separate from or above the normal functioning of the school. The program should fit in with and contribute to the purpose of the school. The purpose of the athletic program is the growth and development of all participants and all others related to the program in such a way that God is honored and praised.”

Michigan High School Athletic Association Code for Athletes

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

“Participation in extracurricular competitive interscholastic athletics is a student’s privilege, not a right, that can be removed at any time for failure to meet the standards and requirements of particular teams, school or school districts, leagues or conferences, and regional, statewide or national organizations to which the student’s school belongs.”

The policies and procedures printed in this handbook flow from the NMCS mission statement, the NMCS athletic philosophy, and the MHSAA Code for Athletes. Students may withdraw from a program any time they feel the rules governing their conduct are in conflict with personal views or principles. The Athletic Director is responsible for enforcing and interpreting policies in the NMCS Parent and Student Athletic Policy Handbook.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE: Because participation in extra-curricular activities is a privilege and not a right, students who represent the school to the public are held to a higher standard of academic standards and conduct. A student participating in a public performance represents many more students than just him/herself. Therefore, students desiring to participate and to represent NMCS in extra-curricular activities must meet basic academic, Christian citizenship, and training standards. Failure to meet these standards will result in the loss of privileges to participate in these activities. Christian citizenship must be reflected in student behavior during the entire calendar year.

2.1 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

1. **Transfers** - Transfer students may not compete in game contests until their eligibility is cleared through MHSAA regulations. Transfer students may practice with the team if they have provided the office a copy of their physical/concussion form.
2. **Suspensions** - A student suspended from school is not eligible to participate in any extra-curricular activity (practice or contest) during the time of their suspension. The student is also not allowed to attend extra-curricular events during the suspension.
3. **9th Grade Eligibility** - A student entering the 9th grade for the first time will be eligible regardless of their previous semester grades. (For International Students, see #7)
4. **Absences** - If an athlete or participant has been absent for more than one half day, he/she may not participate in practices or games on that day. Exceptions may be granted by the Superintendent/Principal in cases of planned absences that require a student to be absent for more than ½ day.
5. **Physical Examination/Injuries** - Students must have on file, in the school's athletic office, a physician's signed statement for the current school year (after April 15) certifying that he/she is physically able to compete in athletic practices and contests. NMCS students may not participate in a practice or contest until the appropriate and completed physical form is on file in the athletic office. Athletes that have been out of action for a time because of illness or injury, and were under the treatment of a physician, must have a written statement from the attending physician allowing the student to return to competition.
6. **Christian Citizenship Form** - Students and parents must sign a form indicating they have read and agree with the NMCS athletic policies called the "Comet Commitment". This electronic signature occurs as students sign up for the sport of their choosing.
7. **International Students- Per MHSAA rules**, international students must be a part of an exchange program approved by the CSIET in order to play immediately on a sub varsity or varsity team. They are limited to only two consecutive semesters. International students that have enrolled in NMCS that are not part of AISP or CSIET program will be allowed to play on sub varsity teams starting the second semester of their enrollment, regardless of grade level.
8. **Concussion Awareness Form:** Per MHSAA rules, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

2.2 NMCS ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY: Extracurricular activities are an extension of the classroom. They provide students an opportunity to explore interests which are not offered with regularity in the classroom. Our mission statement calls for the development of all gifts, not just academic gifts. Extracurricular activities are optional for students and are not required for graduation. Therefore, academic requirements must take precedence over the extracurricular activities. Twenty-two credits are required for graduation and students must have passing grades in those courses in order to graduate. This policy applies to all members of the team including managers.

- A student-athlete must be enrolled in at least 6 classes to be considered eligible to participate in NMCS athletic programs.
- Career Technical Center classes and Work Study programs will count as three classes.
- Athletic eligibility will be reviewed every two weeks during the active sport season.

- Teachers & the Athletic Director will regularly communicate with students, coaches, & parents regarding eligibility concerns.
- If, at any eligibility review date, a student-athlete is failing any class and/or is deemed ineligible because of incomplete work (at least 3 incomplete pieces of classwork), then the student-athlete will not be able to participate in athletic practices and, perhaps, athletic competitions based on the situation and discretion of athletic director. Typically, missing a practice always translates into missing some portion of the next competition. This information will be communicated to parents, student-athletes, & coaches by the Athletic Director
- A student-athlete will be ineligible when his/her class grade point average (GPA) in any individual class is at a failing (E) level and/or when a student-athlete has three (3) incomplete pieces of classwork in any individual class. Each teacher will monitor the eligibility status of each student in conjunction with the athletic director.
- A student-athlete will not return to practice and/or competition until he/she is determined to be eligible by the athletic director. The Athletic Director will communicate eligibility status to the student-athletes, coaches, & parents.
- If a student-athlete is ineligible because of incomplete work, but is still passing the class, then he/she will only be ineligible for practice sessions (not competitions) until the work is completed. Coaches will uphold and enforce this procedure
- It is also possible that a student athlete is deemed ineligible based on inappropriate classroom behavior. This decision will be made based on the discretion of the teacher, Athletic Director, and Superintendent based on the violation of "Comet Commitment" citizenship agreement.
- In order to become eligible again, the student must complete the applicable next step (once completed the student is eligible again at the discretion of the athletic director).
 - Create a teacher approved and put on file with athletic director and teacher.
 - Raise the failing grade to a passing grade.
 - Turn in the missing assignments.
- It is expected that the ineligible student-athlete use athletic practice sessions to conference with teachers and/or complete work.
- Students will never be marked ineligible on the day of a game.
- If at any time a student-athlete is failing two classes based in cumulative grade percentages, the MHSAA requires that student is ineligible for competition for at least one (1) week. If this situation applies, MHSAA eligibility policy will remain in place until the student returns to an eligible status. The ineligibility period will start on the following Monday after the student and parents have been officially notified.

3.0 PARENTAL NOTIFICATION & APPEALS

When a student is involved in a discipline situation that may have consequences related to the sport he/she is involved in, parents will be notified at the earliest practicable time in the discipline process. Students wishing to appeal the decision of the school administration can be made to the school board.

4.0 COMMUNICATION

The athlete is expected to strive for effective communication with his/her coach and all team members. One of the ways the athlete does communicate his/her commitment and dedication to the team and its goals is by such things as faithfully attending practice, giving full effort in practice and in competition, maintaining top physical condition, eating properly, getting sufficient rest, and observing other good habits. The athlete can also communicate in a negative way with expressions of hostility, resentment, jealousy, and with harassment of other players, but this kind of communication is unacceptable. If conflict with the coach or another team member arises, the first responsibility of the athlete is to seek to resolve the conflict by speaking as soon as possible with the coach or team member.

The parents also contribute to the teaching-learning process by their communication. They do so by encouraging the loyalty and dedication of their athlete to his/her team and by encouraging positive and constructive conversation at home concerning their child's participation. They do this also by attending contests in which their children participate when practicable. Finally, parents especially contribute to the teaching-learning process by praying with their athlete about the team and for the coach for whom they play.

Coaches are required to create a medium in which all team communication will take place. It is the parents and student athletes responsible to stay up to date on this communication.

4.1 PARENT/ATHLETE CONCERNS

Like relationships with teachers, parents should feel free to have open, constructive discussions with the coach on issues relating to their child. Parents should expect that the coach will respond with honesty, respect, and a sense of mutual concern for their child. Examples of appropriate issues which may be discussed include the physical or mental treatment of the child, concerns regarding student behavior, or a discussion of ways to help the child improve. Examples of inappropriate issues for parents to discuss with a coach include the child's playing time, coaching strategy or play calling or other student-athletes.

Parents should never discuss anything with a coach in the "heat of the moment" and must wait until rational discussions can be held between the parties (a minimum wait of at 24 hours before contacting a coach on an issue). In addition, parents should use discretion and restraint when determining whether to bring a concern forward to a coach. The athletic director may be notified immediately of a concern or complaint. If either party wishes, the athletic director may be contacted to assist in a meeting to discuss an issue. All meetings held between a coach and parents with or without the athletic director will be kept in strict confidentiality.

5.0 GUIDELINES FOR APPEARANCE FOR ATHLETES

Athletes representing NMCS should take extra care in their dress on the day of a contest. NMCS believes a student choosing to be a part of an athletic team should be well groomed because the individual's appearance, expression and actions have influence on people's opinions of the school's athletes and teams. In order to attain a good team appearance, the athlete shall be well groomed, and not have an appearance that is distracting and/or designed to be conspicuous. It is understandable that individuals have different opinions about appearance and style; however, if one chooses to be a part of an NMCS team, then the guidelines for being on the team should be understood. When NMCS provides an athletic sport to the student body, it is with the understanding that the athlete agrees to abide by the guidelines. Students are expected to wear their uniforms to an event in which games are played outside. Game day attire for sports activities which occur in the gym will be established and enforced by the coach upon approval of the athletic director. The minimum standards for students for home and away contests include dress pants/dresses, sweaters, collared shirts, dress shirts, but no blue jeans, shorts or t-shirts. School dress code policy applies to the dress clothes (e.g. no midriff showing, no spaghetti straps etc.). Teams are encouraged to dress up in school the day of the contest as well. If teams have ordered travel gear, they may also wear that on the day of competition as long as the entire team is following those rules. The coach will carry out the enforcement of game day attire guidelines. Boy's hair must be cut in the front and out of the eyes. An athlete's attitude and appearance are also important during the playing of the National Anthem. Players will show respect during the anthem.

5.1 SPANDEX SHORTS

All volleyball players at the middle school and high school levels are required to be solid black and have at least a 3" inseam for games or scrimmages. This rule applies to all summer scrimmages and camps. Spandex shorts with an inseam no shorter than 3" can only be worn in the gymnasium for practices. However, spandex will need to be covered up in order to be worn outside of the gym.

5.2 SHIRTS

Boys will not be allowed to go shirtless during practices in the gym or on any field the school's athletic team is using. This rule includes away games and meets.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION:

Athletes traveling to all athletic events shall ride in the charter/school bus or other school-approved vehicles. Participants must ride school-provided transportation unless the parents have requested and received special

permission from the athletic director in advance. Athletes are expected to maintain good student behavior in accordance with school policy while riding in these vehicles. Changing clothes on a school provided vehicle is prohibited unless event circumstances require a team to change on the bus in a discrete location as determined by the coach. After the event has concluded, students must sign out with the head coach in order to ride home with parents. Other parents may sign off on allowing students to ride with other parents but that must be approved ahead of time.

Athletes driving to their team's home games must park their vehicles in the student parking lot area for the entire evening. Students with health concerns requiring them to have easy access to their vehicle can be granted a waiver if approved by the Administration beforehand.

7.0 SCHOOL EQUIPMENT & FEES

Equipment and uniforms issued by the school are for use in practices and games only. School issued uniforms are not to be used or worn during the school day or for practices. Use of school owned equipment other than during practices or games may be allowed with permission from the athletic director. Unauthorized use of or taking of school athletic equipment will be considered stealing. Students will be expected to compensate the school for equipment or uniforms not turned in at the end of the season. Athletes may not compete in subsequent seasons until the equipment/uniforms are returned or the school is compensated for them.

To help alleviate the burden of increased officials' fees across all sports and to better align with other MHSAA member schools, we will be increasing our athletic fees. The following fees will be implemented starting in the Fall of 2024...

- High School: \$75 first sport, \$50 second, \$25 third
- Middle School: \$50 first sport, \$25 second
- Family Cap: \$25

Please do not let these increases discourage athletic participation. If families are overly burdened by this additional cost, please contact the athletic director. We are more than willing to work with families through service opportunities to be able to continually offer this athletic experience for your child.

8.0 ATHLETIC COMMITTEE

The purpose of the athletic committee is to assist the athletic director in the function of their duties as well as policy making.

8.1 COMET CLUB

The purpose of the Comet Club is threefold.

1. To raise a sense of school spirit within the community in support of the athletic teams,
2. To help coordinate game workers.
3. To increase revenue for athletic needs through fund-raisers, but not through direct solicitation. Parents involved in NMCS athletics may be asked to serve on the committee or assist in fund-raisers and other activities (e.g. with game events, tournaments etc.).

9.0 GYMNASIUM USE POLICY

To the extent practicable, the Northern Michigan Christian School Association (NMCS) intends to provide Association members with free access and use of the NMCS gymnasium and associated facilities. The following guidelines for gymnasium use shall apply:

1. **APPROVED USES:** Only normal responsible use of the gym is allowable. Examples of approved uses include but are not limited to basketball games or practice, walking, jogging, volleyball games or practice, and indoor soccer. Failure to use the gym properly may result in the revocation of gym use privileges.

2. **GYM ACCESS:** Any Association member wishing to use the gym must make arrangements for the gym to be opened by an NMCS faculty/staff member/coach that has a key to the facility. Users are responsible for securing the gym when it is use. Gym use privileges may be revoked if anyone not authorized by the school uses keys or gains access to other parts of the school without prior permission.
3. **EQUIPMENT USE:** Association members may use their own athletic equipment when using the gym. NMCS equipment may be available from time to time but is not guaranteed to be available on demand.
4. **LOCKER ROOM USE:** Locker rooms may be used to shower and temporarily store clothing. Locks may not be permanently on lockers in the summertime. Any unapproved locks left on lockers for more than one week may be cut and confiscated by the school.
5. **PRIORITY:** Priority of gym use goes to NMCS-sponsored activities followed by times when the gym is rented. Any Association member wishing to use the gym should consult the school's Athletic Director to determine when the gym may be available. NMCS reserves the right to secure use of the gym at anytime.
6. **MINIMUM USE:** In order to justify maintenance and energy costs, and to reduce risks, a minimum of two (2) Association members must use the gym at one time.
7. **MAINTENANCE:** Common sense and courtesy dictate that anyone using the gym or associated facilities leave it in the condition in which it was found. **This includes turning all the lights off and making sure the gymnasium and school are secure before leaving.** Any trash should be picked up and disposed of properly. If a dry mop is available, it should be used to sweep the gym floor. Failure to do so may result in the revocation of gym use privileges.
9. **AGE:** Adult Association members 21 years or older are allowed to utilize the gym without supervision. Association members younger than 21 may use the gym provided they are accompanied and supervised by a parent, staff member and or coach.
10. **GUESTS:** Non-Association members are allowed provided they do not out-number the Association members using the gym.
11. **SUNDAY USE:** There is to be no gym used by school teams or association members on Sundays outside of special events organized by school officials, i.e. church services, etc.
12. **DISCLAIMER:** NMCS reserves the right to change these guidelines at any time. Use of the gym will be at the risk of the Association member(s) or guests using the gym. Injuries that may occur while the gym and/or associated facilities are in use are not the responsibility of NMCS. Damage must be reported immediately and the user is responsible for the cost of repair or replacement. NMCS reserves the right to discharge anyone from the gym at anytime for any reason.
13. **WEIGHT ROOM USE:** The following rules must be adhered to before the weight room can be used by an NMCS athlete or adult Association member:
 1. Only Association members high school age and older are allowed to use or be in the weight room.
 2. Access to the weight room is only available through association members, teachers and coaches.
 3. Shoes are required at all times.
 4. An adult (specified by rule 8) must be present in the weight room when the weight room is in use by high school students.
 5. No one may use the weight room alone.
 6. All students must work out under the guidance of an association member, teacher or coach.
 7. Free weight lifters must work with a partner.
 8. Weightlifters are responsible to keep the room clean. All weights on racks must be replaced immediately following use.
 9. All users must be trained and knowledgeable about proper weight equipment use before they are permitted to use the room.

9.1 OPEN GYMS:

Open Gyms must be coordinated during the allowable time periods, as well as, format set forth by the MHSAA. Open Gyms are for players entering into (summer period) or currently enrolled as a 9-12 student. Exceptions for middle school students would be for volleyball, cross country, track and other non-contact sports. Permission must be granted

by the athletic director and/or superintendent if middle school students are needed for basketball, soccer, baseball and other contact sports where a middle school student comes in contact with a high school student.

10.0 CLOTHING PURCHASES NOT REQUIRED FOR GAMES.

If a coach, player and/or parent wishes to have the team members purchase specific clothing outside of what is required for a game, then that person needs to get approval from the Athletic Director or Assistant AD before they approach the players. Fundraisers to purchase the clothing and/or equipment must also be approved by the Athletic Director and Finance Committee.

11.0 DUAL SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Student-athletes in grades 6-12 are allowed to participate in two sports during the same season. Adjustments to their game schedules should be allowed to fit the needs of that student-athlete if requested. When a student chooses to be a dual sport athlete, they will be required to rate their sports as their first or second priority.

Furthermore, if a student-athlete chooses to participate in dual sports, they must meet the following requirements:

1. Student must be holding a current term GPA of at least 2.7.
2. Student and a parent must sign a contract agreeing to uphold schedule provided by the athletic director.
3. Contracts can be determined void if one of the following occurs.
 - a. Grade level falls below a 2.7. Student will only be allowed to play in their first sport until that grade has improved above the 2.7 GPA minimum.
 - b. If average grade level falls below a 2.0, then they have to remain with their number one sport only (if number one sport has completed the season when the grade rule is determined, allowances can be made to finish their number two sport).
 - c. Parent(s) and student can meet with the athletic director if the schedule is becoming a challenge to grades and/or another issue. Athletic director can then amend or void the schedule if it is determined that the student's commitment level is indeed more than anticipated or an outside issue is making it impossible to fulfill contract. Players can also meet with a coach to express concerns about time concerns and the coach can agree to allow a player to choose one sport.
4. The GPA from the most recent report card will be used to start the eligibility requirement and the eligibility check as prescribed in the policy handbook will be used for regular checkups.

When determining a dual sport schedule, the athletic director is recommended to use the following methodology to determine the priority sport if games are scheduled on the same date. Changes to the methodology should come with the understanding of the student and the coaches and a fair compromise has been agreed to.

1. All conference games should be a priority, with the 1st sport being the deciding game if two conference sports are on the same date. If the second sport is a conference game and the 1st sport is not, then the student should participate in the 2nd sport.
2. If both games on the same date are non-conference games, then the student should play in the 1st sport.
3. All State tournaments, MHSAA or Coaches Association State tournaments (ie, MITCA State Track Meet) are a priority regardless of which sport is the first sport. If both teams are participating in a MHSAA or Coaches Association tournament on the same date, no attention to the level of tournament (districts, regional) shall be given and the 1st team sport is the priority. State tournaments are a priority over conference tournaments.
4. If games are rescheduled for whatever reason and it creates a same day problem, all rules shall be implemented unless other arrangements are made.
5. If NMCS is hosting an invitational or other type of school sponsored tournament, the athlete should be participating in that meet or game.

12.0 AWARDS

The athletic award given in the Northern Michigan Christian High School Athletic Department is a special recognition of athletic participation. To qualify for this honor an athlete must meet the established qualifications of

the school or be recommended by the coach of the sport in which they participated.

1. Award winners should set an example of the highest standards at all times, which includes adherence to the
2. items in the athletic code or be subject to withdrawal of previously earned awards.
3. Any player who quits a sport and is not allowed back on the team, or does not finish the season in good standing, will not receive any awards for that sport for that particular season.
4. Giving of Awards: Awards are given to all the players and managers of a team that complete the season in good standing.

13.0 USE OF 8TH GRADERS ON HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS

When the school enrollment numbers allow NMCS to move 8th grade students up to the JV or varsity team, per MHSAA rules, the 8th grade student can be moved up if there is a need to fill the roster of a JV or varsity team.

1. In the event that moving up an 8th grader(s) would damage the ability of fielding the middle school team, the move must be approved by the athletic committee and school board.
2. Coaches do not have to invite all 8th graders.
3. Coaches may move a “gifted” 8th grader up; however, the coach should follow the same procedures that a varsity coach follows when moving a JV player up to varsity, i.e. parent permission.
4. 8th graders are able to play on both the JV/varsity and 8th grade teams in one season as long as they don't go beyond the allowable number of games played per season allowed by the MHSAA. i.e. moving 8th graders up to the JV once the 8th grade season is complete.

13.1 6TH GRADE ELIGIBILITY

When the school enrollment numbers allow us to move 6th graders up to the middle school team, per MHSAA rules, the 6th graders can be moved up if there is a need to fill the roster of a 7th or 8th grade team. 7th graders moving up to 8th grade is permissible under these same rules.

14.0 END OF SEASON AWARDS

1. The JV team members will receive a certificate.
2. The Varsity letter will be a six-inch maroon letter C for boys and a six-inch white letter C for girls.
3. Letters for managers will be awarded after serving for two years.
4. The award for the first year of Varsity play will be a letter and a pin of that sport. Years following the same sport each team member will receive a bar representing that year.
5. If a player has participated in a sport for four years at NMCS he/she will receive a plaque for that sport at the end of his/her senior year.

15.0 SUNDAY POLICY

No team or individual representing NMCS shall be permitted to practice or play in a game scheduled on a Sunday, including MHSAA Tournament games. In the event a regular season or MHSAA tournament game is scheduled or rescheduled on a Sunday regardless of weather or other type of conflict, NMCS will still choose to forfeit and/or cancel the game.

16.0 NMCS ATHLETICS SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Comments on blogs, online forums or social media sites about NMCS games, players and coaches are welcome and encouraged, however they should promote positive aspects about participating in NMCS athletics. NMCS student-athletes and staff should be courteous and productive and avoid comments that are profane, obscene, offensive, sexually explicit, inappropriate, inflammatory or otherwise objectionable. Blogs often foster debate of an issue; users are to engage in such exchanges with mutual respect for other's opinions.

NMCS student-athletes and staff should assume that all postings on social websites will be publicly available on the Internet and therefore publicly accessible without limitation or protection of any kind. Please consider how much personal information to share, with the understanding that this is information may be linked to your name and

published on the Internet. Complaints submitted to the athletic director from either NMCS or other school members may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspensions and dismissal.

17.0 GUIDELINES FOR MOVING PLAYERS TO THE NEXT LEVEL TEAM

1. A coach may move exceptional players up to the next level when needed.
2. A coach may move players based on need.
3. The head coach is responsible for player evaluation; however, the athletic director may veto the move if there was enough concern about the move.
4. The coach is required to set up a meeting with the JV coach and the parent in a face to face meeting before approaching a potential player
5. Coach must get approval from the athletic director.
6. Upon approval from parent, the coach may then approach the player.

18.0 HIRING OF COACHES AND ENROLLMENT

The athletic director is tasked with forming a committee to hire coaches. All coaches hired by NMCS must be an invested member of the community and send their children to NMCS. Sending at least one child to NMCS does fulfill this requirement. Exceptions can be made by the board of directors on a case by case basis.