



Mercy Academy
Athletic Handbook
2021-2022

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Introduction to Mercy Athletic Handbook

At Mercy, we firmly believe that participation in our athletic offerings is an integral part of a student-athlete's educational experience. When planning and implementing athletic events and activities, Mercy Athletics carefully considers the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of each student-athlete. We strive to assist our student-athletes in the development of their loyalty, responsibility, teamwork, fair play, and hard work through competitive and noncompetitive sports. Student-athletes learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations through their involvement with athletics. These are qualities students need in order to become responsible adults, productive citizens, and skilled professionals.

Being a part of the Mercy Athletics Family is both an honor and a privilege. For these reasons, a good attitude and willingness to cooperate are a couple of the expectations we have of our student-athletes and their families. This document is meant to serve as a guide to help our Mercy families understand the expectations, guidelines, and policies of both the Athletic Department and school administration.

Should there be questions that are not answered in the following pages, please contact the Athletic Office.

GO JAGS!

Athletic Department Staff



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The Athletic Department would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of our student-athletes. Our expectation is that all of our Mercy families will maintain a positive and supportive environment for our student-athletes, officials, and coaches. Please refrain from engaging in any activities that would reflect negatively on Mercy Academy and our athletic programs - whether that is on or off the field, or on social media. We are looking forward to an exciting and rewarding year!

Athletic Offerings

Sport/ Activity	Tryout Date	Season	Level(s)	Head Coach
Cross Country	July 15	Sep. - Nov.	JV/Varsity	Heather Lozon hlozon@mercyjaguars.com
Field Hockey	July 15	Aug. - Nov.	JV/Varsity	Brittany Johnson bjohnson@mercyjaguars.com
Golf	July 15	Aug. - Oct.	Varsity	Bailey Wigandt baileywig3@gmail.com
Soccer	July 15	Aug. - Nov.	JV/Varsity	Andrew Gottbrath agottbrath@mercyjaguars.com
Volleyball	July 15	Sep. - Nov.	FR/JV/Varsity	Connie Hulsmeyer chulsmeyer@mercyjaguars.com
Archery	October 15	Nov. - Mar.	JV/Varsity	Laura Parrish lparrish@mercyjaguars.com
Basketball	October 15	Nov. - Mar.	FR/JV/Varsity	Nick Cann ncann@mercyjaguars.com
Bowling	October 1	Dec. - Mar.	Varsity	Chris Pifine chrispifine@gmail.com
Swimming	October 1	Nov. - Feb.	Varsity	Aaron Cooper acooper@mercyjaguars.com
Softball	February 15	Mar. - June	JV/Varsity	James Brentlinger jbrentlinger@mercyjaguars.com
Lacrosse	February 15	Mar. - May	JV/Varsity	Tom Hill tom.hill1957@gmail.com
Tennis	February 15	Mar. - June	Varsity	Emily Barnett micaem@aol.com
Track	February 15	Mar. - June	JV/Varsity	Heather Lozon hlozon@mercyjaguars.com
Cheerleading	June	July - Mar.	JV/Varsity	Randi Carter rcarter@mercyjaguars.com
Dance	June	July - Mar.	Varsity	Megan Hill/Alyssa Sohl Dance@mercyjaguars.com

Our Mission

The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, sponsored by the Religious Sisters of Mercy, exists to serve young women by:

- Providing a quality Catholic Education within a caring faith community;
- Offering an academic curriculum that provides opportunities for all learners to excel;
- Empowering them to be responsible leaders in service to others;
- Offering the opportunity to build a sense of community with students of diverse abilities and backgrounds;
- Providing academic and real-life experiences that prepare them for life and work in an age of rapid change.

The Mercy Creed

The Academy of Our Lady of Mercy educates each student, each in her own right, to be a woman of Mercy:

- Rooted in the values of Jesus;
- Well-educated and self-disciplined;
- Enriched by diversity and tolerant differences
- Compassionate and generous;
- Able to lead and willing to serve;

... who graciously shares these Mercy values with others.

Athletic Department Philosophy

At Mercy Academy, we consider athletics an integral part of the total educational and growth experience. Athletics provide opportunities that will help students develop and refine athletic skills, test those skills through suitable competition, and develop leadership and sportsmanship. Our athletic philosophy is designed to support and affirm the mission and creed of Mercy Academy. While winning and losing are components of interscholastic sports, competition and participation are emphasized and are the means by which students are guided to integrate the values of respect for one's body, sportsmanship, loyalty, cooperation, respect for others, and fitness for life.

Sportsmanship Expectations

Mercy Athletics puts the student first and the athlete second, so the athletic experience becomes a means of promoting and encouraging learning. This type of learning will be particularly meaningful if all those involved improve their understanding of the importance of creating a positive game environment. Sportsmanship is about personal responsibility. Athletes, coaches, and spectators all play an important role in the creation of a positive environment and it is expected that they understand those roles and responsibilities. Whether participating or spectating, you are a representative of Mercy and are expected to exhibit respect, integrity, honesty, fairness, leadership, and graciousness in winning or losing.

Student-Athlete Expectations

As a student-athlete you are expected to understand that the participation in Mercy Athletics is an honor and a privilege. Being a part of the Mercy Athletics family can be a rewarding and meaningful experience - some of your most cherished moments will happen as a result. In addition to the *Expectations of a Mercy Student* described in the Student Handbook, and other policies outlined in this document, as a student-athlete you are expected to:

- Understand and accept the responsibility and privilege of representing Mercy Academy through the participation in Mercy Athletics.
- Actively participate in all aspects of their chosen sport to acquire basic athletic skills and essentials of teamwork necessary for competition.
- Demonstrate:
 - Sportsmanship at all levels of competition,
 - Leadership,
 - Respect for others,
 - Understanding and tolerance,
 - Hard work,
 - Commitment,
 - Discipline,
 - Personal integrity,
 - Self-control,
 - Responsibility, and
 - Good citizenship.
- Develop a self-awareness (understanding strengths, areas for further development, and strategies for success).
- Demonstrate pride in themselves and their Mercy community.
- Maintain athletic eligibility in accordance with the KHSAA and Mercy requirements.
- Demonstrate a willingness to place the good of the team above themselves.

Parent and Guardian Expectations

Parents and guardians of Mercy student-athletes take on the responsibility of helping their child achieve success academically, socially, and athletically while participating in high school competition. In recent years, the societal idea of winning and the focus on your child's playing time has come to define success and has underscored the significance we (parents, coaches, and administrators) have in educating the whole person. Keeping athletic competition in perspective and the concept of team is key to the successful growth of each of our student-athletes.

Mercy Athletics produces many good athletes in every sport. Our coaches must consider an athlete's skill level, understanding of the game, work ethic, mental toughness, resilience and their attitudes when deciding on playing time. It is not an easy task, nor are these decisions meant to distress or humiliate any athlete. They are decisions for what is best for the team and best for the program. It is acceptable if the athlete and the parents disagree, but parents and athletes must realize that our policy is that coaches and players will discuss playing time matters. Every coach may have a different policy about when and where it is appropriate to discuss those matters so be sure to check with them at their pre-season parent meeting.

It is our hope that the parents and guardians of our Mercy Student-Athletes will:

- Foster an environment in which their athlete can develop attitudes and habits most conducive to positive participation as articulated in the above 'Student-Athlete Expectations'.
- Encourage their athlete to have a good and open relationship with their coach and not to dwell on playing time issues.
- Remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for the athletes, not the adults.
- Support their athlete even when she had a rough practice or game.
- Support the coaches who must make tough decisions.
- Learn the rules of the game and the policies of the KHSAA.
- Teach their athlete to resolve conflicts by using communication skills.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit their athlete.
- Demand a sports environment for their athlete that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and will refrain from their use at all sporting events.
- Refrain from coaching their athlete or other players during games and practices.

Parent Meetings:

At the beginning of each season, the coach and a representative of the Athletic Department will hold a team meeting. There will be many important topics discussed at this meeting that will help define the expectations for the season. Attendance at parent meetings is mandatory for the at least one parent. This is considered a business type meeting to explain expectations, scheduling, any planned travel for the season, and to collect any fees that might be outstanding.

Coaching Staff Expectations

We expect our coaches to understand that they are a representative of Mercy Academy and Mercy Athletics in our community. Like our student-athletes, they must understand the responsibilities and honor that come with being a representative. All actions and choices must reflect the mission and spirit that Mercy Academy has worked on establishing over their nearly 140 year history.

Coaches will

- put the student-athletes first.
- be role models for loyalty, honesty, and integrity.
- constantly strive for professional growth.
- be organized, efficient, and timely.
- be the leaders of their programs.
- be a positive force at Mercy and in the community.
- be knowledgeable of the rules and regulations set forth by the sport and governing bodies.
- be a model of good sportsmanship as described in this document.

Athletic Chain of Command

While we strive for every athlete and family to have a positive experience while participating in Mercy Athletics, there will inevitably come a time when an athlete or parent may have concerns during the season. In this situation, the proper steps should be taken to ensure a favorable outcome:

Step 1: The athlete needs to take their concern to the coach - *We are teaching our young women to be responsible and confident. Articulating her concern to the coach is an important lesson for the athlete to learn.*

Step 2: If the athlete does not reach a satisfactory conclusion, they shall meet with the athletic director, after which, the athletic director will meet with the coach, then schedule a follow up meeting with the athlete. *Again, we are teaching the student athlete how to resolve conflict.*

Step 3: If the concern remains after this meeting, then the parents may request to meet with the Athletic Director, the coach, and the student-athlete.

Step 4: If the student athlete's or parent's concerns and/or issues have not been satisfactorily addressed by the Athletic Director, the student athlete and/or her parent may request a meeting with the President, the athletic director, the coach, and the student athlete.

Eligibility Requirements for Tryouts and Participation

Mercy Academy is a member of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA). As a member, we follow all the policies and guidelines set forth by the KHSAA. All forms needed by athletes are available at www.mercyacademy.com/athletics/information-forms. Any member of the team (including managers or statisticians) must meet the following requirements:

KHSAA Physical Form: *before a student can tryout*

Each prospective student-athlete must have a physical examination conducted by a physician before she is eligible to try out, practice, or participate in a sport. The physical is valid for 13 months from the date of the physical examination and must be completed on the required KHSAA physical form. No other form will be accepted as this form includes written permission to participate from parents or guardians, medical history, and proof of insurance. This form can be found at:

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping and E-Cigarettes Policy:

Mercy student-athletes are held to a high standard with the expectation that they will refrain from the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco like products. Discovery of use at Mercy events and on Mercy property will be addressed through school and discipline will be administered through the school office. Consequences will also be given from their coach. Notification of use not at school events or on school property will also be addressed by coaches and discipline including suspension may be accessed.

Academics: *once a student is selected for the roster*

KHSAA requires that each school does weekly grade checks. Mercy's requirements for grade checks are listed in the "Academic Eligibility" section of the Student Handbook. Student-athletes will be considered ineligible if they are not passing at least 5 classes. During a period of ineligibility, the student may not dress in a team uniform or participate in any competitions or practices.

Athletic Fee and Athletic Passes: *fees collected no later than at the parent meeting*

Mercy charges an athletic fee of \$100 per athlete for the entire year regardless of how many different sports the student chooses to play. All athletic teams that fall under the governance of the Athletic Department are subject to this fee. This fee will be due no later than the parent meeting set up by each coach after the teams have been selected. This fee includes two Jag Passes to all school home and regular season events. The passes are non-transferrable, not valid for use during any tournament, must be presented at the gate for entry, and do not guarantee entry if an event is sold out. Your fee may be paid at any time during the year to reap this full year benefit.

Attendance: *daily, excused absence vs conditional absence*

A student who is absent from school for more than two hours may not participate in or attend any sports, social, or school event on the same day. Extenuating circumstances may be

presented to the Dean of Students for special consideration. Mercy Athletic team travel will excuse a student's absence from school that day. Non-Mercy team travel may be approved through the "Conditional Absence" policy outlined in the Student Handbook. Those are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Dead Period: June 25 - July 9

Students may not receive coaching or training from school personnel (either salaried or non-salaried) in any KHSAA sanctioned sport or sport-activity. School facilities, uniforms, nicknames, transportation or equipment, may not be used in any KHSAA-sanctioned sport or sport-activity. School funds may not be expended in support of interscholastic athletics in any KHSAA-sanctioned sport. Postseason wrap-up activities, celebrations and recognition events relating to a spring sports team at a school which participated in KHSAA state championship play in that particular sport during that particular year may be held.

Tryouts

Each sport that has tryouts may also have cuts to develop competitive teams for their program's success. There will be a minimum of two days of tryouts and evaluations for any sport that plans to cut prospective student-athletes. Eligible transfer students (under KHSAA Bylaw 6) may be granted a tryout upon arrival, but a tryout may be denied depending on timing and requirements.

Athletic Trainer and Injuries



As with any physical activity, there is an inherent risk of injury when participating in athletics. The parent or guardian must sign a waiver, that is part of the KHSAA Physical Form, which provides consent to allow the athlete to receive medical treatment that may be deemed advisable by the high school, the KHSAA, and their representatives in the event of injury, accident, or illness while participating in intramural or interscholastic athletics, including, but not limited to, transportation of the student to a medical facility.

Mercy Athletics provides a full-time athletic trainer, Stephanie Uhrich, through KORT for all students who can help assess game and practice injuries as well as aches and pains that arise from athletic participation. Please have your athlete see the trainer whenever necessary. She is available at the end of most school days in the training room at school or outside in Evans Park. She is also available by appointment - suhrich@kort.com

Facilities Usage

No athlete will be permitted to use any Mercy facility without the direct supervision of the coach or other authorized personnel. Coaches/staff are expected to be in the immediate area. The weight room may not be used without supervision by coaches or the trainer. No food, no horseplay and no running are allowed in the weight room.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for their daughter's transportation to and from practices and/or games and competitions. Coaches may arrange transportation for participants through school using the school buses and bus drivers to some events.

Fundraising

Mercy Athletic Department provides financial support for all athletic teams. Team travel and other needs for teams do arise and a team may be asked to fundraise to help with expenses. All fundraisers must be approved by the athletic director.

Cancellations & Inclement Weather/ Heat Index Policy

The safety of the student athlete will always be the priority when inclement weather arises. The heat index limitations depend upon the sport as outlined by the KHSAA and KMA under KHSAA requirements. The trainer or coach of outdoor sports will take the heat index readings regularly and chart those measurements as required. If lightning is spotted or thunder heard, all activity will stop and the fields be cleared for 30 minutes. All participants and spectators will move to an appropriate shelter. Practice/play may resume after 30 minutes of the last roll of thunder or flash of lightning. School cancellation does not necessarily mean the athletic events scheduled in the evening will be canceled as well. The coaches and/or athletic department will relay the appropriate information as soon as a decision is made.

Secondary Insurance

Mercy Academy carries a secondary insurance policy for all students. An athlete, through their family, is eligible to file an insurance claim in the event they are injured during practices, games, or while traveling to and from team events. The secondary insurance goes into effect after the student's primary insurance policy processes the claim. *This does not replace primary insurance.*

The claim form should be fully completed and submitted within 90 days from the date of injury. Secondary insurance claim forms are available through the athletic office or trainer. Please contact the Athletic Department Staff for forms or the Director of Operations for claims regarding secondary insurance for students.

Uniforms and Equipment

The Athletic Department works with the teams to determine equipment and uniform needs. Uniforms are purchased on a rotation with the newest going to the Varsity teams and working their way down to the JV and freshman teams over the course of a few years. It is important that players and their families take care of the uniform set they receive for the season.

Uniform Collection:

Each coach will organize a uniform collection day at the end of each season. Uniforms must be clean and in good condition in a bag with the player's name on the bag. If the student-athlete quits or is dismissed from the team prior to the conclusion of the season, their uniform must be turned into the athletic office immediately. Failure to return uniforms in the conditions mentioned above and on time may result in detention(s) or a damage fee.

Damaged Uniforms: Damage to uniforms through normal wear and tear (e.g. hole from sliding) will be the responsibility of the Athletic Department. However, if a uniform is lost or damaged in a manner that is not a result from playing, then the athlete and/or their parent(s) will be responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform. This cost is typically more than the original cost due to loss of discounts for team orders.

Failure to Return: Every uniform must be returned to the Athletic Department. Failure to return a uniform will result in the student athlete being assessed a fee to cover the cost of the uniform. Student athletes may be subject to disciplinary action through the school until payment or the uniform is received. Transcripts may be withheld until payment or the uniform is received.

End of Season Awards and Celebrations

Each sport will hold their own end of the season celebration/banquet. Coaches are responsible for this, but will often enlist parents to assist. Every student athlete is encouraged to attend. Each participant in a sport will receive either a certificate or a varsity letter.

Varsity Letter: Each sport maintains its own criteria for earning a varsity letter. Student-athletes should consult the coach of their sport for details on how a varsity letter is to be earned. Student-athletes will be awarded one letter when they meet those criteria defined by the varsity coach. After a letter is earned, student-athletes will then receive the proper medallions or bars to add to her letter contingent upon her continued participation in the sport.

Senior Nights: These nights are organized by the coaches with the help of team parents. All seniors for that sport will be honored at a home event or contest.

College Bound Athletes: Many Mercy Academy student athletes do have the talent, desire, and opportunity to continue their participation at institutions of higher learning. To provide the best and most current information to student athletes and their families, Mercy recommends the NCAA website. For access, go to <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future> and click on the Student Athletes tab. From this screen, you will find access information for the prospective NCAA student athlete.

NCAA www.ncaa.org

NCAA Eligibility Center P.O. Box 7136 Indianapolis, IN 46207 877-262-1492

****For a Quick Reference Guide to Education Resources and NCAA Eligibility go to:

<http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/educational-resources>

Students desiring to participate in athletics for an **NAIA** institution must now follow a similar process. The NAIA has an initial eligibility process that is now required for all student athletes. Information is available at www.PlayNAIA.org.

NAIA www.PlayNAIA.org Contact Ruth Stein ecinfo@naia.org

Signing Dates: Seniors who will go on to play at the next level will be honored on signing days. There will be a fall and a spring date chosen by the athletic office within the weeks allowed by the governing body to celebrate the accomplishment of these student athletes. Family, friends, and the Mercy Community will be invited.