

# **MORRIS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL PARENT/ATHLETE ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

It is the mission of Morris Community High School to provide students with quality co-curricular activities that support the Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs of the District.

The co-curricular program at Morris Community High School will promote a sense of Pride and Belonging among the students, staff and community, with a Commitment to the Development of Leadership, Character, Good Sportsmanship, Citizenship and Life-Long Skills.

### **Core Beliefs:**

- Students will challenge themselves and others to reach their fullest potential.
- Students will develop leadership skills through a supportive culture that provides personal growth for all.
- Students will appreciate success, grow from adversity and achieve through diverse activities.
- Students will demonstrate responsible behavior, personal accountability and be able to provide and accept constructive criticism through open communication.
- Students will respect themselves and others through the spirit of competition and performance while representing Morris with pride.

## **BRAND STATEMENT**

**“It Takes More to Be a Redskin”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook has been produced to help inform our parents and athletes about the philosophy and structure of the Morris Community High School athletic department and the teams that make up the department. This guide will include many factors considered to benefit parents and athletes in areas, problems, and circumstances that normally occur in high school athletics. The realization that all possible situations cannot be planned for, this guide will demonstrate the district wide procedures that coaches use to establish a somewhat uniform method of handling issues within the athletic setting. While each athletic program may have a variety of program unique rules, this handbook will cover the global philosophy, structure and procedures of all athletic programs. Procedures for particular situations not covered by this handbook will be addressed as they occur. The athletic department as a whole will always attempt to make decisions in the best interest of all student-athletes concerned as well as for the best interest of each individual student-athlete. We feel the athletic department provides a vital and necessary component of our school, our community and to the overall excellence of our school's pride, success and lifetime experience. First and foremost Morris Athletics must be a "we" before "me" organization. It is a test of character and commitment for all student-athletes, coaches, parents and fans. Sports are not solely about building better athletes, but a paramount effort for all to becoming better people. We need to be leaders in promoting the belief in the power of sports to help build character and values as we reach for personal goals. We are **ONE** department working to build on **ONE** common philosophy: to give our best. In return we expect this from our parents and athletes.

***"REDSKIN PRIDE NEVER DIES" IS MORE THAN A PHRASE, IT'S AN  
ATTITUDE  
IT'S A HEARTFELT FEELING OF PRIDE IN WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO!***

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

General Provisions.....	Page 4
Sports.....	Page 4
Coaching Philosophy.....	Page 5
Communication Expectations.....	Pages 5-7
Attendance.....	Page 7
Extra-Curricular Code Standards.....	Page 7
Eligibility & Injuries.....	Page 8
Sport and Activity Conflict.....	Page 8
Before/After School Needs.....	Page 9
Transportation.....	Page 9
Spectator Code of Conduct.....	Page 9
Support Services.....	Page 10
Assistant Coaches Job Description & Qualifications.....	Page 11
Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct.....	Pages 11-15

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Participation in athletics is a privilege, not a right. This privilege carries with it responsibilities to your community, school, team and coaches. Athletes are representatives of their school and community. Your conduct must reflect these responsibilities, before, during and after contests. As a representative of Morris Community High School you are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and ethical behavior at all times. Be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Good sportsmanship is a prime objective at Morris Community High School and is expected of all participants. Players must abide by the decisions of the game officials who are charged with administering the contest. You are expected to respect the talent and efforts of opposing players and coaches. Any disrespect shown to opposing players and coaches is inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Control your emotions. Develop a good attitude and character. Use your energies to develop your ability and your team. Keep your cool when emotions are high. Racial and ethnic prejudice has **NO** place in competitive athletics. Respect your fellow athletes as equals and not according to race, creed or religious belief.

## **MORRIS HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS**

### Fall Sports

Boys & Girls Cross Country

Boys Golf

Boys Soccer

Football

Girls Swimming

Girls Tennis

Girls Volleyball

### Winter Sports

Boys Basketball

Boys Swimming

Cheerleading

Competitive Dance

Girls Basketball

Girls Bowling

Wrestling

### Spring Sports

Boys Baseball

Boys Tennis

Boys Track

Girls Soccer

Girls Softball

Girls Track

## **MORRIS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL COACHING PHILOSOPHY OF ATHLETICS**

We believe competing on sports teams help develop pride and loyalty within the school and community and among their participants. Participating on sports teams also builds self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment as individuals. We believe that being on a varsity team is an HONOR that an athlete earns with hard work, dedication, development and refinement of their skills and talents through their sport.

1. Coaches of varsity teams will select those players from their program who can compete competitively in a contest at the varsity level. The ultimate goal of a varsity team is to be as competitive as possible. In most game situations, not all players will have the opportunity to play. The coach solely determines playing time. When looking to promote underclassmen to the varsity level, overall player development should be considered along with the potential for team success. Parents need to be a part of the process for selection of underclass athletes being elevated to the more advanced level. Ultimately, continuous player development and long term program success is our goal.
2. Lower level coaches will make greater efforts than varsity coaches to promote participation in games by all team members. They must balance their wish to build a winning team spirit with the need for giving hard-working young players the opportunity to compete during each contest. Playing time at the high school level is never equal among players during each game and throughout the season. At the lower levels, the main focus should be to develop players for the varsity level by working on the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful at the varsity level.
3. Sports are by definition extra-curricular and voluntary in nature. It is the goal of all participants in the Athletic Department to encourage as many students as possible to participate in sports while attending high school. Coaches are encouraged to build their programs to participation maximums at all levels. One main focus at the freshmen level is to develop interest in the sport by attempting to attract as many athletes as possible to the sport.
4. Sportsmanship plays a vital role in every contest in which we participate. Fairness in competition, positive group interactions, and proper individual behavior is imperative

## **COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS**

Parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each other's position, you are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to the student-athlete. When an athlete becomes involved in a sports program at Morris Community High School, you have a right to understand what expectations are placed on the athlete. This begins with clear and open communication.

Communication you should expect from your child's coach.

1. Philosophy of the coach.
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all the players on the squad.
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests.

4. Team requirements, i.e., practices, special equipment, out-of-season conditioning, fees etc.
5. Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation.
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of your child's participation and its impact on the team. (including, but not limited to; academic rules, code violations, administrative discipline etc).

#### Communication coaches expect from parents

1. Concerns should follow this chain of command: 1) Coach 2) Athletic Director 3) Principal 4) Superintendent.
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
3. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations before the season begins.

As your child becomes involved in the programs at Morris Community High School, he/she will have the opportunity to 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 child wishes. At these times it is a common practice to advise your son/daughter to meet with the coach before or after practice to talk about their concerns. Discussion between the coach and athlete first is encouraged. If the issue is not resolved we encourage the parents to contact the coach for further discussion.

#### Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:

1. The treatment of your child; mentally and physically.
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all athletes involved. As you have seen from the list above, certain things can be, and should be, discussed with your child's coach. Other concerns must be left to the discretion of the coach.

#### Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:

1. **Playing time.**
2. Team strategy.
3. Play calling.
4. Other student-athletes.

Situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position on the issues or concerns. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution.

#### If you have a concern to discuss with a coach, please follow these procedures:

1. Call the coach to set up an appointment.
2. If the coach cannot be reached, contact the Athletic Director.

- 3. Practice the “24 hour rule” in an emotional situation. It is never appropriate for parents to contact a coach before, during or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Contacts of this nature do not promote resolution.**

The Next Step:

What a parent can do if the meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution.

1. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.  
Research indicates a student involved in co-curricular activities has a greater chance for success during adulthood, the preceding procedures have been established to maximize efforts of all participants to succeed. Many of the character traits required to be a successful participant on a sports team are exactly those that will promote a successful life after high school. We hope the information provided makes both your child’s and your experience with the Morris Community High School Athletic Program less stressful and more enjoyable.

## **ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES**

Athletes must meet all academic and behavioral guidelines in order to participate and maintain team member status. All athletes are expected to follow the guidelines and team rules provided by the school and each team or program. The coaches and administration encourage all athletes to participate in multiple school-sponsored activities. We believe school-sponsored sports should be your first priority above and beyond all other sporting activities.

### **ATTENDANCE**

In order for an athlete to participate in an athletic contest, he/she must be in attendance a minimum of a half school day the day of the contest. Athletes must attend periods 1-4 or periods 4-7 in order to be considered half-day attendance. Excused and Prearranged Absences (excluding student illness) will be addressed on an individual basis. Saturday and Sunday contests will be addressed on an individual basis.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Morris Community High School Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct can be found in the Morris Community High School Planner/Handbook and in the Parent/Athlete Athletic Handbook. The policies and procedures outlined in the code of conduct are minimum school standards. Coaches and sports programs may implement more specific procedures.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### *Seasonal Eligibility*

Morris Community High School is a Member of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA). The IHSA and Morris High School have certain basic requirements that must be met for an athlete to be eligible:

- Must have passed 5 .5 credit academic subjects during the previous semester.
- Must have a current physical examination on file.
- Must have a current **Parental Consent Form For The Athletic Department** on file.

### *Weekly Eligibility*

There will be a weekly report each week (except the first week of each semester) throughout the school year that will be available on Monday to all coaches. Eligibility is effective Monday through Sunday. It is the responsibility of the athlete, their parents and the coach to know the eligibility rules. Athletes and parents can follow student grades on **Powerschool**. If an athlete is not passing five credit-bearing classes, they will be declared ineligible.

## **INJURIES**

The coach is the first line of communication for injured athletes. The coach will then alert the athletic trainer about the injury. The athletic trainer has contacts with many local health care professionals. The athletic trainer needs to provide a release to the coach before they are allowed to return to participate in a sport. Be responsible to report all injuries accurately and promptly. Make sure you have an emergency plan in case of injuries during practice and/or games. Injured players who require examination by a physician must have a physician's release before they are allowed to return to participate in a sport.

## **SPORT AND ACTIVITY CONFLICT**

As a school, we have historically honored and respected the religious beliefs and practices of all students and have worked to accommodate their needs for necessary time away from school. Some athletic practices or contests may fall on religious holidays or Sundays. In the circumstance of an emergency, conflict or event which a team participant misses a contest or practice, that participant needs to communicate with the coach as far in advanced as is possible. The decision of the coach whether the absence is excused or unexcused is final.

## **BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL NEEDS**

The coaches at Morris High School understand and are sensitive to the before and after school educational needs of athletes. If an athlete needs extra time before or after school for educational support and the coach determines it is a valid absence it shall not be held against the athlete in anyway. It is the responsibility of the athlete to give the coach prior notification if they will be missing practice for additional educational help. If the coach determines it is not a valid absence, then the team discipline guide may be utilized. The decision of the coach whether the absence is valid or not is final.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The administration at Morris High School, in an effort to provide quality sports programs, provide transportation to and from athletic events. While each coach sets their own regulations, we believe it's best for our student-athletes to take advantage of team transportation. In the event of special circumstances or emergencies, our student-athletes may ride home with a parent or legal guardian. We do however need student-athletes and their parent or guardian to check with their coaches and sign out of the athletic event when they will be leaving early or riding home with their parent or guardian. Athletes are not to ride to or from athletic events with anyone but a parent or guardian without prior consent from an administrator of Morris High School.

## **SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Spectators, adults and students, are to respect the talents and efforts put forth by the players and coaches of all teams. This courtesy will also be extended to all game officials. Furthermore, spectators are to treat school representatives and other spectators with dignity and respect. Any actions that are counterproductive to these expectations are inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Spectators not conducting themselves appropriately will be subject to any of the following actions, depending on the severity of the incident:

1. The spectator may be asked by any school representative to refrain from further inappropriate actions.
2. The spectator may be asked by any school representative to leave an athletic event. Should a spectator refuse to leave when requested, local law enforcement agencies will be contacted for assistance. Once a spectator has been removed from an athletic event, the Athletic Director will hold a conference with the spectator to resolve the issue.
3. Severe or repeated offenses may result in the Athletic Director's requesting a "No Trespassing" Letter from the Superintendent and/or the contacting of local law enforcement officials.

## **Support Services**

Students, and/or parents that have a concern about drug and/or alcohol use are urged to take advantage of the student services available through the high school. The School Nurse, Counselors and the Faculty are available during school hours as resources for these issues. If so desired, students may seek referral to outside agencies. All information shared with Morris High School Employees is strictly confidential and will not be used as a basis for reprimand.

## **Morris Community High School Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct**

Morris Community High School encourages all students to take advantage of the school sponsored extra-curricular activities. Morris Community High School and the community take great pride in these programs designed to enhance the well-balanced educational programs offered.

**Intent:** Participation in extra-curricular activities at Morris Community High School is not a right but an honor and a privilege. Participants make a commitment to their peers and coaches/sponsors to follow rules and to be able to perform at their best at all times. One of the primary goals of the extra-curricular programs at MCHS is to provide students with the lessons and skills necessary for success not only on the athletic field, stage, etc., but also in all areas of their lives. In addition, they have a responsibility to serve as role models for other students in the school, as well as for others in the community. Participants, whether in or out of uniform, carry with them not only their own reputations, but that of their families, their team/activity and their school.

The following limits defined by the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct represent the minimum standards and expectations of any student involved in any activity while representing Morris Community High School. Participants are encouraged to refer to the specific rules and regulations outlined both here, and by their coaches and/or advisors. Extra-curricular activities are listed in the MCHS Student Handbook and are defined as:

1. Athletic activities as defined by the IHSA and Morris Community High School.
2. Extra-curricular activities: all clubs and organizations of the school that are defined in the Morris Community High School Student Handbook.

**Rationale:** The use of alcohol, tobacco products or illicit drugs can harm a student's physical and mental health, athletic and academic performance, and personal reputation. Use of these items is both illegal and dangerous. The safety and well being of our extra-curricular participants is the top priority of Morris Community High School and its programs. The conduct of a Morris Community High School extra-curricular participant should be consistent with the mission of the school, and the behavioral policies set forth shall reflect appropriate values and attitudes.

**The first time in an individual's high school career that a student becomes a member of an activity, the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct becomes active. The Code of Conduct is in effect twelve months of the year, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, in and out of season, on and off school grounds until graduation.**

Note: All penalties involving the Code of Conduct are cumulative for the tenure of the student's career at Morris Community High School.

**Important:** Morris Community High School is not asking students to make sacrifices. Sacrifice implies giving up good things. We are asking our students to do the opposite: live clean, think clean and do things that will make them better people, and well-respected members of their community. With these things in mind, there are certain types of conduct that will not be tolerated from a Morris Community High School extra-curricular participant:

### **MAJOR RULE INFRACTIONS**

- The possession, use, purchasing, selling, or distributing of tobacco, alcohol, or controlled substances, and/or drug paraphernalia.
- Criminal acts as defined by state criminal law. Minor traffic violations do not apply.
- Acts of bad conduct; fighting, bullying, sexual harassment, theft, gross misconduct to staff, requiring a student to be suspended out of school for a period of at least (1) day.

**Important:** Morris Community High School teaches and encourages our students to make good choices and use sound judgment in their everyday lives. Students will be subject to a great many decisions throughout their tenure at MCHS, some based upon peer pressure and peer acceptance. With that in mind, students are discouraged from attending parties/events where illegal alcohol or drugs are present, or being in places where a high amount of peer pressure may be placed upon them. As a role model and representative of Morris Community High School, attendance at illegal activities outlined above may promulgate the perception that the student condones or enables that type of illegal behavior.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR MAJOR RULE VIOLATIONS**

#	Violation	Consequence	Brief
1.	A student violates the E.C.C. one time during his/her high school career.	Level One Suspension	10% or 30 Days
2.	A student violates the E.C.C. a second time during his/her high school career.	Level Two Suspension	50% or 90 Days
3.	A student violates the E.C.C. a third time during his/her high school career.	Level Three Suspension	Calendar Year

4.	A student violates the E.C.C. a fourth time during his/her high school career.	Level Four Suspension	Remainder of High School
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**Level One Suspension:** The student will be suspended from all sports/activities they are currently participating in at the time of the infraction for a minimum of 10% of the maximum allowable events/contests for that activity, or 30 calendar days in the case of a year-round activity, beginning with the first competition following notification to the student of the infraction. If the student is not participating in a sport or activity at the time of the infraction, the suspension will take place during the next sport/activity(s) in which they participate. The student may continue to practice at the coaches/sponsors discretion. If the coach/sponsor requires the student to continue to practice, each unexcused practice will result in a one-contest suspension.

**Level Two Suspension:** The student will be suspended from the sport/activity(s) for 50% of the allowable contests for that activity (rounded up to the nearest whole number), or 90 calendar days in the case of a year-round activity, beginning with the first competition following notification to the student of the infraction. The student will also be required to participate in an intervention program that meets the following criteria:

- The program deals with substance abuse, anger management (in cases warranted), making choices, or problem solving.
- The program is offered by a licensed agency.
- The program is pre-approved by the Principal.
- The student pays the entire cost of the program.
- The student may return to participation in events/contests upon completion of suspension and continued participation or completion of intervention program.
- The agency administering the intervention program must certify, to the Principal, successful completion of the program.

**Level Three Suspension:** The student will be suspended from extra-curricular competition for one calendar year beginning with the date of the Code of Conduct violation.

**Level Four Suspension:** The student will be suspended from all extra-curricular activities for the rest of his/her high school career.

All penalties may be appealed to the Morris Community High School Extra-Curricular Council.

**Important:** The violation consequences listed in the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct are MINIMUM requirements students are obligated to meet for successful participation in extracurricular activities at Morris Community High School. Coaches/Sponsors rules must comply with these minimum requirements, but may exceed these rules if they choose. If a coach/sponsor increases their rules to exceed the minimum requirement, these rules will be distributed in writing to every participant. These rules will also be discussed at the coach/sponsors pre-activity meeting with the parents involved in that activity. Copies of these rules and regulations must be filed by the coach/sponsor with the Athletic Director and Principal prior to the start of their season of activity.

### **VIOLATIONS DURING THE OFF-SEASON**

If a student violates the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct at any time, he/she will be placed on the step determined by previous violations. The penalty for this infraction will take place at the start of

the next activity's season/year. A year begins when fall activity/sport practices begin. A year ends the day before the next year begins.

### **CARRY-OVER FROM ONE SEASON TO ANOTHER**

Any penalties for the Code of Conduct violations will carry over from one season/year to another. If a student completes a penalty for one activity but does not successfully complete that activity in good standing, he/she must repeat the penalty in the next activity. If the student serves a percentage of the penalty in one activity but does not complete the penalty before the conclusion of that activity, the remaining percentage of the penalty will carry over to the student's next activity.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR CODE OF CONDUCT**

Coaches, sponsors, teachers, administrators, and/or law enforcement agencies may report any alleged violation of the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct at any time. Any person from the public may notify school authorities regarding alleged rules violations by a signed letter to the Principal or Athletic Director. A violation must be reported within 30 days from the alleged violation.

### **DETERMINATION OF PENALTY**

After a reported or suspected violation, an initial conference will be held with the student and the athletic director, or another administrator designated by the Principal.

If a violation has been substantiated, the student will be subject to the measures set forth within the Extra-Curricular Code of Conduct.

To determine how many contests/events the student must miss for any violation, the penalty will be based upon the maximum number of contests/events in that particular activity. The total number of contests/events missed will vary with each activity. The coach/sponsor of each activity has a list of how many contests/events must be missed for each of the activities offered at Morris Community High School. If the infraction that the student commits requires him/her to serve an out-of-school suspension, the activity penalty begins on the date of the out-of-school suspension so that contests/events missed while the student is suspended count toward the total number of contests/events the student misses.

### **MORRIS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL EXTRA-CURRICULAR COUNCIL**

The purpose of the Extra-Curricular Council is to consider appeals of alleged major rule infractions. The Council shall:

- Establish if an infraction did occur.
- Establish if the student charged was a party thereto.
- Establish that the student knew what the rules and regulations were.
- Determine appropriate consequences if warranted.

The Extra-Curricular Council shall convene as soon as possible upon receipt of the appeal of an alleged major rule violation decision. The student's parents or guardians shall be notified in writing at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in order to allow parents to attend, if they desire, unless an earlier time is agreed upon in writing by the parent and the chairman of the Extra-Curricular Board (Principal). The 72 hours minimum can be waived verbally by mutual consent. The student will be given the opportunity to testify and present evidence on his or her behalf. The conclusions of the Board shall be in writing and a copy sent by mail to the parent/guardian upon completion of the hearing. If a student admits his/her guilt, he/she will not go before the Extra-Curricular Council. A letter will be sent home explaining the situation and the penalty.

## **MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. The Principal will preside over the hearing, but will not vote.
2. One additional member of the school administration.
3. Three (3) coaches who are not, and were not, involved with the student in question during the current or previous school year.
4. A teacher, at-large, (who is associated with the extra-curricular program) shall be appointed by the Principal and the Athletic Director.

A minimum of three (3) members must be present to establish a quorum.

## **PROCEDURE OF DUE PROCESS**

"Due process" is a procedure that the courts of law recognize as a necessary part of any rules and regulations. "Due process" furthermore, and of primary importance, recognizes the rights of the individual since it outlines their recourse in the event they feel a wrong decision has been made. The "due process" steps outlined hereafter is the procedure for a student and his/her parents to follow in appealing decisions relating to eligibility. It should be understood that students and parents will be expected to follow the "due process" steps in the event legal action should be initiated at some later date.

- An initial conference will be held with the student and no less than two (2) members of the administration, to include the Athletic Director, Principal or any other Morris Community High School administrator.
- After a written ruling of ineligibility resulting in suspension from extra-curricular activities has been made by the administration, a student and his/her parents may formally appeal the decision in writing to the Extra-Curricular Council provided an appeal is received within 14 days from the receipt of the letter of ineligibility.
- After an appeal has been received and the school's formal reply mailed to the parents, a date for a hearing with the Extra-Curricular Council will be established by the Athletic Director, such date not later than 10 days following appeal.
- The student will be provided with an opportunity to testify and present the evidence on his/her behalf at the hearing.
- Proceedings of the hearing, including the decision, will be put in writing, and a copy of these proceedings will be mailed to the student and his/her parents.
- All rulings of the Extra-Curricular Council are final and may not be appealed.
- The Extra-Curricular Council will make every effort to meet as soon as possible.



