

Monson High School Department of Athletics



Guide for Students & Parents

Forward

The purpose of this guide is to coordinate the efforts of the total athletic program offered by the Monson Public Schools. In order to insure consistency in athletic activities, the administration and athletic director have set forth certain guidelines and regulations to be followed by those persons directly involved with the supervision. It is expected that all persons will have a complete understanding of the proper interpretation of the regulations and apply them in a way that will be most satisfactory.

The policies for interscholastic athletics are aligned with the rules & regulations of the MIAA and PVIAC. If you have any questions regarding policy, ask your Coach, Athletic Director, visit the MIAA website at www.MIAA.net or visit the Monson Public Schools website at www.monsonschoools.com.

The Monson School Committee believes that students will benefit from the experiences in self-discipline and team effort made possible through participation in inter-school sports.

Participation in interscholastic athletics will be subject to approval by the School Committee and will be in accordance with regulations and recommendations of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA).

At the high school level, interscholastic athletic competition will include a variety of sports. Students will be allowed to participate in individual sports on the basis of their abilities and desire.

The School Committee is aware that team participation in athletic contests by members of the student body requires that "away games" be scheduled. It also recognizes that there is a need to regulate certain aspects of student participation in such contests. Therefore, the Superintendent will establish regulations to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff members who participate in these activities.

Our school is a member of the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference (PVIAC) and the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Athletic Directors Association (MSSADA). We participate in the following activities:

Season	Sport	Teams
Fall	Cross Country Soccer Golf Unified Basketball	Boys and Girls Varsity Boys and Girls Varsity (JV if enough players) Varsity (open to both boys and girls) Open to both boys and girls
Winter	Basketball Cheerleading Swimming	Boys and Girls Varsity and Junior Varsity Varsity (open to both boys and girls) Boys and Girls Varsity
Spring	Baseball Softball Track and Field Lacrosse	Varsity and Junior Varsity Varsity and Junior Varsity Boys and Girls Varsity Boys and Girls Varsity

Mission

The athletic program can only be as strong as its leadership. Administratively, we are pledged to a program that places endeavors on and off the athletic field as visible examples of the principles of the social interaction we desire to be learned by our students. To this end, we have selected leaders in who we empower the responsibility to supervise such a program. The coaches are expected to secure student leadership of such quality and understanding that they are able to instill in all members of athletic squads, the objectives desired by the department and the school.

Within high school sports programs, young people learn the values associated with discipline, performing under stress, teamwork, sacrifice, commitment, effort, accountability, citizenship, sportsmanship, confidence, leadership, and organizational skills, participating within rules, physical well-being, healthy lifestyles and striving toward excellence. If interscholastic athletics are to be justified as school activities, then values such as these must be the properties of our programs.

While winning contests rather than losing them is a commendable goal, emphasis is placed on preparing students to succeed, as well as, other lessons of a lasting and positive nature. Students should be encouraged to participate in a varied set of activities that may include a wide range of sports or activities outside of the athletic realm. Young people need time to learn, to think and simply grow up. Our program should allow this to happen as comfortably as possible.

It is to this end that we strive to coordinate the entire athletic program and in turn achieve these goals.

Conduct and Sportsmanship

Players will always conduct themselves in a gentlemanly and ladylike manner.

Remember, you represent Monson High School. You will treat all persons with courteous behavior and respect at all times.

Coaches expect student athletes to be with them at all times. Athletes are expected to be on the bench as a unit, not wandering around. In all sports, no student is permitted on the team bench unless he/she is a member of the team or is the team manager.

Derogatory remarks will not be made toward officials or opponents at any time. Upon completing games, all players on a team will cross the field or the court and shake hands with all the opponents. There is no better way to impress opposing schools and spectators with the type of school we have.

We want to win, and we strive to be winners at Monson High School; but we admire the athlete who can be respected by everyone for his/her conduct as well as his/her outstanding ability.

SPORTSMANSHIP CODE

- We consider all athletic opponents as guests and treat them with all the courtesy due friends and guests.
- We accept all decisions of officials without question.
- We never hiss or boo a player or official.
- We never utter abusive or irritating remarks from the sidelines.
- We applaud opponents who make good plays or show good sportsmanship.
- We never attempt to rattle an opposing player, such as a player attempting a free throw.
- We seek to win by fair and lawful means, according to the rules.
- We do unto others as we would have them do unto us.
- We try to win without boasting and we lose without excuses.
- We ask that every player and fan in attendance do his level best throughout the contest to cooperate with us in living up to this code.
- And may the better team win!

Principles and Policies of the Department of Athletics

General

Proper behavior and sportsmanship for our athletes and students is expected. By so doing, we can give the Monson High athletes and student body the best competition any high school could possibly have. There are many fine schools that we would like to have on our schedule. In order to schedule these teams, we must establish good public relations with all schools. Each player, each spectator, and each coach must realize that he/she represents Monson High, whether it is on or off the field, in practice, or in a game.

The Coach is responsible for each student athlete on his/her team. He/she will stress the need for academic success and provide guidance whenever possible with the goal being to have the average grades of our athletes above the class average. Coaches also encourage athletes to be top students and top citizens by checking on their academic work and their overall citizenship as often as possible. It is essential for athletes to try to develop a sense of responsibility, respect and pride in all of these areas.

Relationship between the Instructional Program and the Athletic Program

Athletic personnel must keep in mind that they are teachers first and coaches second.

Athletics are responsible jointly with academic subjects for establishing those standards of good behavior that represent the best in good citizenship. Athletics must contribute to those virtues which are socially sound for a democracy such as truthfulness, fair play, honesty, modesty, give and take, courtesy, pride, poise, self-discipline, courage, generosity, self-restraint, and loyalty to team, school, and the community.

The athletic program shall be closely coordinated with the general instructional program and properly articulated with the other extra-curricular activities of the school.

Coaches in each individual sport make every effort to cooperate with coaches in other sports. Doing so helps:

- strengthen the continuity between the school and the athletic program; and
- meet the objectives of the school to help further the growth of the individuals taking part in athletics.

Cooperation in establishing and enforcing uniform training rules or regulations for all sports is desired from all coaches involved in the athletic program of the school.

Parent Involvement - Athletic Booster Club

The Monson Public Schools Administration believes strongly in parental involvement at all levels and invites everyone to belong to the Athletic Booster Club. In an effort to aid in communication between coaches, parents, the Athletic Director, and Athletic Booster Club, we recommend parents attend the Athletic Booster Club meeting each month (usually the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm). These meetings are held to share ideas and important information regarding the sports and awards programs at Monson High School.

Athletic Schedules

All schedules for athletic contests are arranged by the Athletic Director. An attempt will be made to schedule schools of approximately the same size, the same team ability, or with comparable athletic programs. Sports schedules and scores are posted and updated by the Monson Athletic Director on ArbiterGame website (new in Fall 2021).

The following is a list of the maximum number of games or meets, exclusive of tournament competition, to be scheduled in any one year for each sport:

Sport	Maximum Games/meets per Week	Maximum Games/meets per Year
Baseball	3	20
Basketball	3	20
Cheerleading	3	20
Cross Country	3	16
Golf	4	20
Lacrosse	3	18
Soccer	3	18
Softball	3	20
Swimming	2	18

Track	3	16
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Pre-Sport Orientation

Coaches will hold a pre-sport orientation for students interested and/or involved in the sport. This meeting may be held before the first formal practice session. A complete run-down of all team rules and regulations, practice sessions, schedules, objectives, training, and safety advice, etc., should be undertaken at this time.

Assistant Coaches

Coaches may seek the assistance of unpaid assistant coaches for any athletic season. Any individual working in the capacity of coach must be school appointed.

The procedure to apply to be an Assistant Coach follows:

1. Perspective unpaid assistants are to write a letter of application to the Coach.
2. The Coach will write and sign a letter recommending the applicant and forward the letter to the Athletic Director.
3. The Director will meet with the candidate and, if viewed favorably, the candidate's letter will be forwarded to the High School Principal. The Principal will then meet with the candidate, and then appoint or not appoint the candidate based on the recommendation of the Athletic Director.

Student Managers

Each head coach will determine the number of student managers he/she needs and, in turn, select the people he/she feels possess the character, physical ability, and desire to do an outstanding job.

Student managers must conform to the academic eligibility requirements of the athletic teams. A set of duties and responsibilities will be distributed to student managers by the coach in order to avoid any last minute confusion before an interscholastic contest.

Physical Examinations

An athlete's physical examination is only good for 13 months from the date the physical examination was given. An athlete may be eligible at the start of the season, but could possibly become ineligible at some point during the season. Please double check the date of the physical examination so that the athlete does not become ineligible at any point. We will also be tracking physical dates at school. A copy of the physical examination needs to be on file with the school nurse in order for the athlete to be eligible for the first day of practice/tryouts. The nurse will be providing a list of physicals to the Athletic Director on the first day of tryouts. An athlete will not be able to participate if they are not on that list with a valid physical.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the nurse:

MHS: (413) 267-4589 ext. 6009

Monson High School Athletics Required Online Course

All parents of student athletes must complete the National Federation of State High School Associations ***Concussion in Sports*** online training. You can find this course at: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses> then click on ***Concussion in Sports***.

Physical Examinations/Disqualifications

Before participating in any sport, all students must pass a physical examination within 13 months of their first practice session. Physical examinations must be performed by the appropriate medical authority as defined by the MIAA Sports Medicine Committee.

Currently the definition is a duly registered physician. In addition, Physician's Assistants and Nurse Practitioners may administer school physicals under the provisions of existing State law.

Insurance

All athletes must have some form of insurance coverage.

Completed forms must be returned to the Athletic Director before the first practice of the team.

Travel Policy for Out-of-Town Athletic Contests

- All student athletes will travel to and from all out-of-town contests as a group in school-sponsored conveyances.
- Student athletes are not permitted to drive themselves or any other athletes to any away athletic contests.
- It may be possible for a student athlete to leave their team at the game site and return home with parents but only with approved written consent of the parents.

Violation of Travel Policy

Penalties for violating any of the previously stated policies will be at the discretion of the Principal and Athletic Director and may include forfeiture of playing time and/or letter eligibility by the athlete.

Athletic Fee Policy

The Monson School Committee has authorized an athletic fee for all interscholastic participants at Monson High School and Granite Valley Middle School. Without this fee it would be impossible for the school committee to authorize any involvement in competitive athletics. The table below outlines the fees for each sport:

Girls Soccer	\$175
Boys Soccer	\$175
Golf	\$300
Girls Cross Country	\$150
Boys Cross Country	\$150
Cheerleading	\$175
Girls Swimming	\$150
Boys Swimming	\$150

Boys Basketball	\$300
Girls Basketball	\$300
Softball	\$250
Baseball	\$275
Girls Lacrosse	\$150
Boys Lacrosse	\$150
Boys Track & Field	\$150
Girls Track & Field	\$150

There is a maximum \$600.00 yearly cap for each family.

The athletic user fee is \$50 for any student receiving free or reduced lunch.

No refunds will be given after the first athletic contest. Checks are to be made out to: Town of Monson.

Practice Sessions

At least one coach must be in attendance at each practice session.

Coaches must be notified, by the student athlete or parent of the athlete, at the beginning of tryouts of any scheduled trips in which the athlete may be involved which may come in conflict with practice sessions, games, or meets scheduled for the sport in which he/she would like to participate.

Attendance at Practice Sessions

Attendance at practice sessions are mandatory for anyone on a varsity or junior varsity team unless excused for medical or religious reasons.

A maximum of 6 practices per week may be held (Monday – Sunday). Athletes must be given 1 day free of athletic participation in a Monday – Sunday week. This one day off may not be viewed as optional.

Practices may be held on Sundays after 12:00 pm.

Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers must attend practice just as the players do, as defined by the coach.

Athletes must inform coaches at least 24 hours prior to missing any scheduled practice. This is the duty of the athlete or the athlete’s parents, not another team member.

An athlete will be excused without penalty with respect to his/her status on the team when a good reason is provided for his/her delay for (conference with a teacher) or absence at (sickness, doctor or dentist appointment) a practice session when the coach has been notified prior to that practice session.

Violation / Practice Session or Game/Meet Attendance

Penalties for violating any of the previously stated policies/procedures may include forfeiture of playing time and/or letter eligibility by the athlete.

School Attendance

High School students: to participate in a practice, game or meet, a student athlete must be in school for the equivalent of two full learning blocks of that day unless the school principal gives special permission.

For 7th and 8th grade students: no student athlete is permitted to participate in a particular interscholastic contest on a day that the student is not in school by 10:35AM or in school at least ½ of the school day (3 hrs 15 min).

School Tardiness

Constant tardiness will not be permitted. The athlete as any other student must follow school rules and regulations.

Bona Fide Team Rule

A bona fide member of the school team is a student who is regularly present for, and actively participates in, all team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to practice or compete with an out-of-school team. The first offense of the bona fide team rule will result in a suspension of 25% of the season. The second offense will result in suspension for an additional 25% of the season, and ineligibility for tournament participation.

Violation / Bona Fide Team Member

The first offense of the bona fide team rule will result in a suspension of 25% of the season. The second offense will result in a suspension for 25% of the season and ineligibility for tournament participation.

Violation / Leaving the Team

Any player, once a member of a team, who voluntarily leaves that team, may be suspended from further participation in all interscholastic athletics for a period of up to one year.

This process will be initiated by the Coach of the violating player in writing to the Athletic Director. A hearing will then be convened by the Director; the hearing will include the Coach, Director, athlete, and the parents of the athlete. This meeting will be held to determine what, if any, action will be taken.

Should the student wish to join the same team the following season, it will be up to the Coach's discretion as to whether or not the student may do so.

Violation / Conduct and Sportsmanship Expectations

- First two offenses – player receives a warning unless violation is of a flagrant nature, then a 2-week suspension;
- Offenses after 2 warnings – player receives a 2-week suspension;
- If poor behavior continues - player receives a one-year suspension from season play.

All Disciplinary Actions - Length of Time

While it is our fervent hope and expectation that all athletes at Monson High School exhibit good decision-making throughout the entire year, our training policy penalties, according to MIAA Policy, may only be invoked while the athlete is in-season, (e.g., the first day of official practice through the final season contest including any competition or tournament play).

Procedure for Student/Athlete or Parental Complaints

If student athletes or parents/guardians have a complaint about any aspect of the athletic program, the proper procedure is to bring it to your child's Coach so that he or she may respond to your concern.

- Student to Coach
- Parent to Coach
- Student to AD
- Parent to AD
- Student to Principal
- Parent to Principal
- Student to Superintendent
- Parent to Superintendent
- School Committee

No Game Day Discussion with Coaches Rule - Regarding Players or Team

Contact with the coach about the players or team should not be made on the day of a game. Please see the section titled "Procedure for Student Athletes or Parental Complaints" above in regards to the appropriate measures to take for a complaint.

Athletic Eligibility Requirements

General Requirements

- A student must not have reached his/her 19th birthday as of September 1 of the school year.
- A student must be in attendance at school at least the equivalent of two full blocks of instructional time on the day of a scheduled practice or game in order to participate.
- All students participating in interscholastic athletics must carry accident insurance.

Academic Requirements

- A student must be fully enrolled in school to be eligible for participation in the athletic programs.
- In the extended block schedule, students must pass three (3) out of the four (4) courses to be eligible for participation.
- Students participating in the fall season must have passed six (6) of the eight (8) courses in the previous school year.
- The academic eligibility of all students shall be considered as official and determining only on the date when the report cards for that ranking period have been issued to the parents of all students.
- Incomplete grades may not be counted toward eligibility.
- A student who repeats work upon which he/she has once received Credit cannot count that subject a second time for eligibility.
- A student cannot count for eligibility any subject taken during the summer unless that subject has been previously pursued and failed.

Chemical Health

From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco products; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his/her doctor.

Violation / Chemical Health - Minimum Penalties

First Violation:

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic events totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, penalties will be determined by the current or next season of participation. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. Any fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

The student may attend interscholastic activities during suspension from the team but may not dress in the team uniform.

Second and Subsequent Violations:

When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a second or subsequent violation has occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. For the student, penalties will be determined by the current or next season of participation. Any fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

The student may attend interscholastic activities during suspension from the team but may not dress in the team uniform.

Locker Room Procedure

All coaches shall emphasize to their squads the importance of proper conduct in the locker room.

- Only managers and coaches are permitted in the athletic storage at any time.
- Athletes should not take a locker for the present season until he/she is assigned one by the coach.
- After each practice session a coach will make sure the locker room is reasonably clean.
- No one is to be left inside the building once the coach leaves.

Checklist for Players:

- must report to the gym or field at the time designated;
- must have all belongings that they intend to take home that evening as they will not be allowed to return to their lockers in the classroom wings;
- leave no towels, clothing or papers on benches or on the floor;
- responsible for keeping the locker room neat and clean;
- lock all money, wallets and valuables in the gym lockers;
- must leave the building before the coach. No students are allowed to be in the building unsupervised. Students are dismissed through the front lobby.
- return all uniforms and equipment to the Coach at the end of the season.

Injuries

If an athlete is seriously injured, the coach shall immediately notify the athlete's parents and the Athletic Director.

Athletes may go to the doctor of their choice at any time, but in cases where medical advice has been given, it is the duty of the athlete to make as much of the knowledge known to the coach as is necessary for him/her to make an intelligent decision. Written consent from the doctor must be obtained before the athlete is permitted to return to action.

Accident and insurance forms must be filled out and submitted to the Athletic Director as soon as possible by the coach of the sport on all injured athletes who may require medical attention.

Away Contests

All athletes will travel to and from all out-of-town contests by school designated transportation. It may be possible for a team member to leave the squad at the game site and return home with parents (only with approved written consent of the parents).

Athletes are not permitted to drive themselves to any away athletic contests.

Consequences for this action will be at the discretion of the Principal and Athletic Director.

The manner of dress of athletes will be expected to conform to the coach's regulations for the particular sports activity. Coaches will be responsible for the conduct of their team at all away contests.

Practice Games and Scrimmages

Coaches may, with the approval of the Athletic Director, arrange practice games or scrimmages with other schools prior to the regular season.

Game Cancellation Procedure

In general, the home school determines whether or not there will be a game cancellation.

However, in the best interest of all concerned, the Athletic Directors from both our district and the opposing team will make contact in regard to the final decision.

The Athletic Director will:

- Notify the coach when a game is cancelled;
- Consult with the coach on a reschedule date.
- Notify the students of the date change.

Sports schedules and scores are posted and updated by the Monson Athletic Director.

Hazing

Below acknowledges your understanding that the MHS Parent- Student Handbook includes the Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing, M.G.L. c269 sections 17-19 and that your son/daughter understands and agrees to comply with the law.

Awards

Coaches Award

At the conclusion of each session, the varsity coach for that season will select a recipient for "The Coach's Award." This award will be presented to its recipient at the annual sports awards program and may be given for any of the following reasons:

- Most valuable
- Most improved

- Most desire
- Most dedicated to the sport
- Best offensive player
- Best defensive player
- Sportsmanship

Special Awards

Robert E. Moriarty Award

Awarded for excellence in the sport of boys' soccer. This award is voted on by the squad members to select the most valuable player of the soccer season.

Bimm Wytas Award

Awarded to the senior male athlete who demonstrates the highest athletic ability coupled with the highest adherence to the principles set forth in this guide. Voted on by all coaches.

Diana Roberts Award

Awarded to the senior female athlete who demonstrates the highest athletic ability coupled with the highest adherence to the principles set forth in this policy guide. Voted on by all coaches.

Keith Gamage Award

Awarded to a male or female runner who exemplifies the courage, dedication, and perseverance shown by Keith Gamage during his lifetime. Recipient is selected by the Cross-Country coaching staff.

Sportsmanship Award

Awarded to the athletes who exhibit the highest qualities of sportsmanship. Recipients will be selected by the coach of each sport (Varsity and JV).

Most Promising Player Awards

Awarded to the most promising Junior Varsity player. Recipient selected by all JV coaches and award is presented at the Varsity Awards program.

Athletic Letter Requirements

Sport	Requirements
Baseball	50% of total number of innings in the season. EXCEPTION: Pitchers
Basketball	75% of total number of halves in the season.

<i>Cheerleading (Winter)</i>	Must cheer in 100% of the games
<i>Cross Country</i>	The ten runners whose names were submitted to compete in the WMASS Championships.
<i>Golf</i>	Must earn points in 50% of the matches.
<i>Soccer</i>	75% of total number of halves in the season.
<i>Softball</i>	50% of total number of innings in the season. EXCEPTION: Pitchers
<i>Swimming</i>	Any swimmer who competes in WMASS Championships or earns points in 75% of the meets, or earns a total of 30 points.
<i>Track & Field</i>	Earn 10 points. Points are earned during regular season meets according to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st place = 5 points • 2nd place = 3 points • 3rd place = 1 point
<i>Team Managers</i>	Students who participate in the day-to-day activities of the team.

Monetary Donations / Fundraising / Grants

Donations under \$1000 for Athletic Programs

A donation under \$1000 will be accepted by the Principal with the approval of the Superintendent of the district. Due to the nature of distributing monies equally among all programs, outside donations may not be made to specific teams or coaches. However, a letter/note from the donor stating his/her/their wish for a specific use of the funds may be included with the donation check. Checks for donations may be made out to Monson High School.

Any funds received will be placed in the Monson High School Athletic Improvement Fund. Through input from the coaching staff and based on the current needs of the athletic programs, Administration will use these funds to aid the high school athletic programs. These funds will only be used for the athletic department.

Donations for \$1000 and over for Athletic Programs

Any gifts over \$1,000.00 will be subject to School Committee approval. For more information on this policy, please visit the Monson Public Schools website at www.monsonschools.com; go to the School Committee section, then review the Policy Manual on-line (policy files JJFA-R and KCD).

Once accepted by the School Committee, the procedure stated above for “Donations under \$1000” will be followed.

Fundraisers by Teams

The Athletic Director and Principal must approve all fundraisers. Fundraising requests will be evaluated on the following:

- type of fundraiser
- why money is being raised
- needs of the program
- other scheduled school fundraisers
- Athletes’ participation

Grants/Advertisements

Research is continually being done to investigate various areas of grant funding for our programs.