

2005-2006 Middle School Sports League Guidelines

The Middle School Sports League (MSSL) was founded to provide students with the opportunity to participate in athletics in a fun, supportive and enriching environment. Sportsmanship has always been one of the essential components of the league's philosophy. In order to promote a positive environment for all participants (including players, coaches and parents), the league has created the following guidelines. An understanding of and adherence to them by all parties helps to ensure a more positive and rewarding athletic experience for everyone.

Players: Players are expected to participate in a positive and respectful manner both on and off the field/court. Players should respect all parties (including teammates, opponents, officials, scorekeepers and coaches) at all times. Particular attention should be paid toward honoring referees' decisions. In every way (voice, action and gesture), players should strive to cooperate with officials. Players should also act as helpful and respectful hosts at home games and considerate guests at away matches. Examples of respectful behavior off the court include greeting opposing players, cleaning up after themselves, and taking good care of equipment and facilities. Cheering or complimenting good play (even an opponent's!), giving assistance to a fallen player, and behaving thoughtfully in both victory and defeat are on court examples.

Coaches: Coaches should model behavior for all of the other parties. They should remember that athletic participation is only a component of each student's educational experience. Coaches' behavior should bring credit to themselves, their team, their school and the sport. Coaches too need to show respect for officials and scorekeepers and their respective decisions. Special attention should be paid by coaches toward managing their players and the game so that all players enjoy a positive experience. The league encourages coaches to create as equal a playing field as possible while recognizing that one of the intrinsic purposes of all the league's sports is competing and winning. Coaches also need to help facilitate the appropriate behavior of their players and fans before and after games. Asking for clarification (rather than arguing with officials), pulling out "star" players when one has established a solid lead, and complimenting an official's correct decision (even when it rewards the other team), are all examples of model behavior.

Parents: Parents (along with other family members and friends) also have an important role to play in promoting a positive and enriching atmosphere. At different times this may require them to play a more active or passive role. Perhaps the most obvious contribution parents can make is showing their support for all of the players at the games. Cheering on positive play while refraining from criticizing "mistakes" (by officials, scorekeepers, players and coaches) is a good example of both active and passive participation. Parents model respect by leaving the coaches to do the coaching, the officials to do the officiating and the scorekeepers to do the scorekeeping. Though it may at times prove challenging, it is always in the children's best interest that such boundaries be respected. Whether at home or away games, parents bear a special responsibility to be either passive or active participants at the right times. Parents *are* encouraged to take an active role in helping coaches to oversee players who are waiting to participate in upcoming games. Examples of thoughtful parent behavior include helping guests at one's home games, waiting until the next day to check in with a coach about a concern, and corralling a wayward player back into the gym at an away game.

I agree to abide by the MSSL Guidelines written above. I also agree that any issues or actions contrary to the MSSL Guidelines will cause the player to be removed from the team. Signatures are required in order for player to participate.

PARENT SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

PLAYER SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

COACH SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____