



**MERRIMACK HIGH SCHOOL  
ATHLETIC GUIDELINES &  
CO-CURRICULAR AGREEMENT  
2025-2026**

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Dear Parents and Student Athletes,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 year of Merrimack High School Athletics! We are excited for our student athletes to develop and be successful both in the classroom and in athletics. We show our appreciation to the coaches, players, staff, and student-body for their commitment to excellence, positive influence in the community, and dedication to academic achievement.

As a student-athlete you have a tremendous responsibility to the Merrimack community to be successful both in and out of the competitive environment. Let's succeed on all fronts: In the classroom, in competition, through our conduct, and being great role models in our community. Student-athletes are clearly under a high level of pressure to meet a wide array of important team and personal goals. That comes as part of your commitment to represent this school at the highest levels as you proudly represent the Tomahawks.

As fans, let's remember that good sportsmanship begins with an understanding that athletics are an integral part of the educational process, presenting innumerable opportunities for self-expression, mental alertness, and physical growth. Let's be loud! Let's be boisterous! And let's support our team in the most positive way.

Have a great season!!

Sincerely,

Adam F. French  
Director of Athletics

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# **PRINCIPLES OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS PROGRAMS**

In sports, winning games is often considered the only measure of success, but not at Merrimack High School. Interscholastic athletics serve as a miniature model of life, providing opportunities for students to learn responsibility, fair play, cooperation, concern for others, leadership, respect for authority, good citizenship, loyalty and tolerance. This is not to say that the will to win is not important. It is very much a part of an individual's personal development and provides opportunities to fulfill one's potential. Thus, the athletics program, which is centered on the welfare of students, is a vital part of a Merrimack High School education.

## **To fully realize its potential for educational enrichment, the interscholastic athletic program:**

- Is an integral part of the district's educational program and conducted so that it is worthy of such regard.
- Supplements rather than serving as a substitute for basic physical education and intramural athletic programs.
- Is subject to the same administrative control as the educational program.
- Is conducted by adults who have adequate training in physical education or through coaching certification programs.
- Fosters the physical welfare and safety of participants.
- Is conducted in accordance with the letter and spirit of the rules and regulations of the league, state and national athletic associations.

Participation in interscholastic athletics at Merrimack High School is a privilege. This participation should elicit great pride among all school community members. Part of the responsibility that goes with the participation in school sports is the need to maintain satisfactory standards of behavior. This Interscholastic Athletics Handbook clearly defines the standards for student athlete behavior. It is the responsibility of each student athlete and his/her parents) to be familiar with the contents of this handbook. Before a student is permitted to participate on an athletic team, both the student and parent must sign an Interscholastic Athletics Participation form (online through Final Forms) acknowledging an agreement to respect and abide by these rules and behavior expectations in order to participate in interscholastic athletics at Merrimack High School.

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# **SPORTS OFFERED & ATHLETIC REGISTRATION**

Tryouts for programs are open to all students provided they meet the standards of academic eligibility, school citizenship, completed permission, liability information and basic physical/health qualifications. Participation in the program, therefore, is a privilege earned by students who meet and maintain these standards.

## **Available Sport Offerings**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>
Cross Country	Alpine Skiing	Baseball
Field Hockey	Basketball	Lacrosse
Football	Bowling	Outdoor Track & Field
Golf	Gymnastics	Softball
Soccer	Ice Hockey	Tennis
Spirit (Cheerleading)	Indoor Track & Field	Unified Track and Field*
Volleyball	Spirit (Cheerleading)	
Unified Soccer*	Swimming & Diving	
	Unified Basketball*	
	Wrestling	

\*High school Unified Sports provide an opportunity for students with and without intellectual disabilities to compete on the same team.

## **Athletic Registration Procedure**

**Before any student-athlete can participate in tryouts the following requirements must be met:**

- The parents/guardians are responsible for completing an online registration through **Final Forms** and ensuring that any and all medical information concerning your child's health, medical concerns, injuries, medications and allergies are reported to the Athletic Department & Coaches. **The email address for the primary Final Forms account owner must belong to a parent/guardian for the registration to be valid.**
  - The parents/guardians and student athletes must read and agree to the Code of Conduct and Athletic Policies on the **Final Forms** registration page.
  - All students must have a copy of a valid physical, stating they are cleared to play sports, on file in the athletic office.
  - All students must be academically eligible. Academic eligibility information will be covered in detail in this document.
  - All student athletes are encouraged to take the Impact test prior to participating in school athletics. This is a cognitive baseline test that will aid our athletic training staff in the event of a concussion. An Impact test is good for two years. (Non-contact sports are excluded).
  - If you transferred to MHS over the summer or during the current school year (incoming 9th graders excluded), please complete the Transfer Affidavit and turn it into the Athletic Office prior to the first day of tryouts/practice.
  - If you are homeschooled or attend a charter school, please complete the Charter/Home School Student Form and turn it into the Athletic Office along with proof of residency and proof of academic eligibility prior to the first day of tryouts/practice.
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# **SPORTSMANSHIP**

## **Guidelines for Spectators**

- Spectators are an important part of the games and are encouraged to conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.
- Spectators should always respect officials, visiting coaches, players, and cheerleaders as guests in the community and extend all courtesies to them.
- Enthusiastic cheering for one's own team is encouraged.
- Booing, whistling, calling out individual names, and disrespectful remarks shall be avoided.
- There will be no noisemakers at indoor contests during play. Anyone who does not abide by this rule will be asked to leave the premises.
- Pep bands or school bands, under the supervision of the school personnel, may play during timeouts, between periods, or at halftime. Bands must coordinate their play so as not to interfere with a cheerleading squad on the floor or field.
- The throwing of debris, confetti, or other objects from the stands is prohibited. Offending individuals will be asked to leave the premises.
- Spectators should encourage each other to observe courteous behavior. Improper behavior should be reported to the school authorities.
- Spectators will observe the rules of the local school concerning food and drinking consumption, littering, and parking procedures.
- Spectators will respect and obey all school officials and supervisors at athletic contests.

**Anyone who does not abide by these rules will be asked to leave the premises.**

## **Guidelines for Student-Athletes**

- Learn and understand the rules of your sport. Play hard, play to win, but play fairly within the rules.
  - Do not allow your temper or frustration to distract you from the fundamentals of good sportsmanship. Maintain self-control. Respect your opponent. Never taunt. Congratulate him or her at the game's end. Acknowledge good play. Respect the integrity and judgment of the officials. Never question the decision of an official.
  - Be an example for your school, teammates and opponents. A player who is disqualified from a contest for unsportsmanlike behavior by an official is prohibited from playing in the next regularly scheduled contest game and must view the NFHS Sportsmanship video on the NFHS website prior to returning to game action.
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## **CO-CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS**

The co-curricular program for the Merrimack School District includes the following:

- All interscholastic athletic teams
- The performing arts program (non-credit bearing)
- Student government and Class officers
- All clubs

The following co-curricular expectations are designed to:

- Uphold the educational value of programs where each individual contributes to the whole for the success of the group and or team.
- Ensure students perform at peak levels, developing self and group/team discipline.
- Prepare students for living within the law and contributing to their community.
- Reflect the school district's high standards.
- Ensure that students participating in co-curricular programs serve as good representatives of our schools and demonstrate appropriate representation through their character, sportsmanship, teamwork, mutual respect and trust.

### **Academic Performance**

For the student athlete to be eligible to participate in interscholastic sports they must be taking six units (minimum of five if a Senior) of work and passing four units. Eligibility grades are based on quarter grades and not semester grades. Athletes participating in fall sports will be deemed to be eligible or ineligible by the previous fourth quarter grades. All incoming freshmen are eligible to participate in a fall sport. For winter and spring sports, freshmen student athletes will adhere to the Merrimack High School eligibility standard of taking six units of work and passing a minimum of four units of work (NHIAA) criteria). Eligibility status is determined on the day that official report cards are distributed to students. Academic Make-Ups: A student may regain eligibility by making up academic deficiencies, failures, or incompletes of the regular school year through academic/credit recovery programs completed prior to the last date to play a sport as listed in By-Law Article XXXVIII of the NHIAA Handbook. Individual schools may adopt more restrictive policies relative to academic make-up based on the school district philosophy and/or resources.

### **Daily School Attendance**

Students who participate in Merrimack School District co-curricular activities are expected to attend school on the day of the meeting, practice, contest or performance. Any student who does not attend school by the beginning of his/her first scheduled class for reasons of sickness or truancy will not be eligible to participate in any scheduled meeting, practice, contest, or performance on that date. First class absences are waived if parental written excuse is presented upon return. If the violation becomes known at a later date, it will be enforced at the next meeting, practice, contest or performance following disclosure. Repeated violations would be considered gross misconduct. Administration may grant exceptions to this for extenuating circumstances.

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## School Suspension

Any student suspended out of school (OSS) will not be able to participate in OR attend any co-curricular program, game, performance, practice, and/or meeting on the day or days of the suspension.

Any student who has been issued an in-school suspension (ISS) will not be able to participate in OR attend any co-curricular program, game, performance, and/or meeting on the day or days of the suspension. However if they have attended and followed all of the ISS expectations and completed school work, students will be permitted to attend practices only.

## Athletic Codes

An athlete may not quit one sport and try out for another sport after the season has begun without the mutual consent of both coaches. "After the season has begun" is defined as the first scrimmage or game, whichever comes first.

An athlete who has been injured and has received medical treatment must receive written clearance from the treating physician or designee to return to participation.

It should be understood that any person who participates in a sport is subject to injury. These injuries may occur despite proper training, safe practice and game environments.

Parents agree to be supportive and encouraging of all participants, coaches and officials at all athletic events. Good sportsmanship will be displayed at all times by all spectators (refer to the Communications and Behavior Guidelines brochure).

All NHIAA rules and policies will take precedence as the minimum level of expectation.

**All athletes must travel to and from events with the team.** Requests must be submitted in writing and approved by the administration.

## Application of the Co-curricular Agreement

Each co-curricular program may have additional expectations; these additional rules will be placed on file in the administrative offices. Once a student has begun his/her first sport or activity of the year he/she is under the agreement for the remainder of the school year. In case of a violation of this agreement, all remediation must be completed before participation in an ensuing activity or event, even into the next school year.

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## Serious Behavioral Issues

Students who participate in Merrimack School District co-curricular programs are expected to adhere to high standards, both physically and socially. The following behaviors constitute violations of these expectations:

- Illegal use or possession of tobacco in any form
- Illegal use or possession of alcoholic beverages
- Illegal use or possession of drugs and/or mood-altering substances
- Gambling on any Merrimack School property or at any school sponsored event
- Vandalism
- Stealing
- Bullying and/or harassing others
- Being convicted of any criminal act on or off of school property
- Arrest and/or release to Protective Custody (PC) may be construed as a violation of the policy.
- Gross misconduct including, but not limited to: assault on an advisor, coach, judge, official, participant, opponent or spectator, leaving an activity in anger, interrupting the flow of the activity or inappropriate behavior and/or gestures directed toward any of the above (NHIAA policy criteria)
- Hazing and team activity initiations involving hazing (according to New Hampshire RSA 631:7)
- Any other behaviors not listed that the administration deems to be inappropriate

## Penalties for Serious Behavioral Issues

### First Violation

For whichever is longer of fourteen (14) calendar days or the period of time necessary for the student to meet the following conditions:

- (1) the student cannot participate in or dress for games, scrimmages, competitions, performances, voting etc.
- (2) the student must be present at all practices, meetings and contests.
- (3) the student must attend a meeting with his/her parent and the coach/advisor and/or counselor to cooperatively develop a corrective action and follow-up plan which may include counseling and/or community service.

### Second Violation (within the same school year)

The student will be suspended from participation in all athletic programs for sixty (60) calendar days (violation time may proceed into the next school year). To regain eligibility to participate in athletic programs, the student must present and receive approval of and complete a remediation plan. The plan must include counseling and community service. Administration must approve the plan and proposed community service and confirm that all conditions have been met.

### Third Violation (within the same school year)

The student is suspended from participating in all athletic programs for one (1) calendar year. Any student wishing to participate in athletic activities in subsequent school years must meet with administration, guidance counselor and parents/legal guardians to develop a long-term remediation plan before returning to activities or athletics.

## Appeals Process

Students will be accorded due process as is outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook. All appeals (academic or code violations) must be submitted in writing to the administration. Violation consequences will be in effect during the appeal process. Students who need confidential assistance or support concerning any of the behaviors or academic requirements listed above may contact their guidance counselor or administrator.

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## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY & WAIVER PROCESS**

To compete in interscholastic athletics, a student must be enrolled in at least six (6) classes (minimum of 5 if a Senior) and receive passing grades in at least four (4) classes or better during the previous grading term.

### **EVERY REPORT CARD MATTERS**

<b>Season</b>	<b>Initial Eligibility to begin the season is based on</b>	<b>Eligibility to complete the season is based on</b>
Fall (begins in August)	Q4 (June the previous year)	Q1
Winter (begins in Nov./Dec.)	Q1	Q2
Spring (begins in March)	Q2	Q3

An Incomplete is not considered a passing grade for eligibility purposes.

### **Academic Eligibility to Begin a New Season**

The following students are NOT eligible to apply for an academic waiver:

- A student who has passed fewer than four (4) academic classes and is taking less than six (6), (five (5), if a Senior) classes – unless the student is receiving services through Special Education or under a 504 Plan. This violates not only the Merrimack School District Policy but also the NHIAA policy (Article II section 2, part A).
- A student who has been previously granted an academic waiver in high school and is not making adequate progress toward graduation. Typically, only one (1) waiver is granted during high school.
- Adequate progress toward graduation is defined as follows:
  - Freshman (Class of 2028) = 5.5 credits (22 overall credits to graduate)
  - Sophomore (Class of 2027) = 11 credits (21 overall credits to graduate)
  - Junior (Class of 2026) = 15.5 credits (21 overall credits to graduate)

If a student is eligible to apply for a waiver:

- Applying does not guarantee approval.
- Application must be submitted to the athletic office no later than 2:00 p.m. on the 2nd day of tryouts/practice. Waiver applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.
- The student-athlete may participate in a maximum of 3 days of tryouts in a cut sport but then may not participate until the final decision regarding the waiver is made.
- If a student does not submit a waiver application, he/she forfeits the opportunity to regain eligibility after recovering any Incomplete grades.

## Academic Eligibility During a Season

Waivers and waiver extensions may be granted after a season has begun under the following circumstances:

- The student has fulfilled the obligations of the academic contract signed when the waiver was originally approved.
- The student has demonstrated effort in each class by consistently completing all required work when it's due and by seeking regular extra help from the teacher as needed – There can be no missed assignments.
- The student is making adequate progress toward graduation as defined above.

## INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC GUIDELINES

### Sport Tryouts

- All athletes will be guaranteed a minimum of three (3) days of tryouts for those particular sports that have to cut.
- Some sports do require cuts due to the number of athletes that are interested in participating on that team.
- Every student is evaluated in a fair and impartial manner.
- Attendance is mandatory during the tryout period. The only exceptions are:
  - o Medical reasons
  - o Family emergencies – does not include vacations

### Philosophy by Sport Level

#### **Junior Varsity (JV), Reserve, Freshman:**

These programs are intended for those who display the potential of continued development into productive varsity level performers. Team membership varies according to the structure of each sport, but sophomores and freshmen occupy the majority of the roster positions. In certain situations, juniors who are expected to make contributions at the varsity level will be considered for JV participation. Also, 9th and 10th graders may combine to form a reserve team instead of having a freshman only team.

At these levels increased emphasis is placed upon elements and strategies of team play, physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills and social-emotional development. The JV program works towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and striving for victory. The outcome of the contest becomes a consideration at this level. An attempt will be made to play all participants; however, equal playing time is never guaranteed nor is it required. With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the junior varsity, reserve, and freshman level.

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**Varsity:**

The varsity level of interscholastic athletic competition is the culmination of the high school athletic program. Normally, seniors and juniors make up the majority of the roster, however, gifted sophomores and sometimes freshmen may be included. Team play, sportsmanship, individual physical ability, motivation, and mental attitude are very important aspects of competition at this level. While contest participation over the course of the season is desirable, a specified amount of playing time is never guaranteed. It is vital that each team member have a role and know its importance. Preparing to win and striving for victory in each contest are worthy goals of a varsity level team. The varsity coach is the leader of his/her sport program and is responsible for communication and system development among each level.

**Dual Sport Athletes (2 sports in the same season)**

In rare occasions students may wish to participate in two sports during the same season (for example: swimming and indoor track). Students may do so only with the approval of both head coaches and the Athletic Director. There is an application that must be completed prior to the season, see the Athletic Director for more information.

**Unified Athletics**

The Unified Sports programs provide an opportunity for students with and without intellectual challenges to participate on an athletic team together. The student with intellectual challenges is considered a unified “athlete.” The student without such challenges is considered the unified “partner.” Currently Merrimack High School offers unified sports in Basketball (winter season) and Volleyball (spring season) with the hope of adding Soccer (fall season) in the coming years.

**School/Family Vacations, Extended Absences**

Every student-athlete is expected to be present for all team practices and contests. Because of scheduling demands set by the NHIAA, many of our high school teams practice and/or play during scheduled school vacations.

Student-athletes who take school sponsored trips during the scheduled season should not be penalized. However, it must be understood that time away from practice and games will impact an athlete’s ability to immediately return to competition. Student-athletes will be evaluated upon their return from an extended time away. If participation in a game or practice could be considered a health or safety concern, the head coach will not allow them to compete. This is to make certain they are not putting the student-athlete at risk for injury or that they are a detriment to the team.

**If the student-athlete takes any other type of vacation, the student-athlete will be suspended for the same number of contests he or she missed while on vacation.** Additional consequences may be imposed for missed practices at the coach’s discretion. Any issues or problems arising from this policy should be addressed to the Athletic Director.

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## **Attendance at Practices and Competitions**

In order for students to participate in Merrimack High School athletics at all levels, it is necessary for student athletes to attend all practices and contests. Dedicated participation on the part of each student athlete is essential to the morale and performance of the entire team. Athletes and their families are expected to plan trips and other foreseeable family obligations around the athletic calendar. If student athletes are unable to fulfill their obligations to the team, they may choose not to participate for the season. Should extenuating circumstances be known prior to the season beginning, the student should communicate this information to the coach or the Athletic Director before the first day of tryouts. Student athletes who miss a scheduled contest(s) during the season shall be deemed ineligible for an equal number of contest(s). The Athletic Director shall determine all matters of student eligibility. Appeals for special circumstances may be submitted to the Athletic Director and the High School Principal.

## **School Athletic Equipment**

Students have an obligation and responsibility for all equipment and uniforms issued to them. Proper care, retention, and return of all equipment and uniform parts is a requirement. Students failing to turn in all issued equipment, uniforms, or returning equipment damaged through misuse, are responsible to meet the current replacement cost for such equipment or uniforms. Payment is required at the time of the loss, prior to the next season of athletic involvement, or graduation, whichever comes first. In the event that the equipment or uniform is found and/or returned after payment, a refund will be made. Students will not be issued an athletic uniform if there are any fees owed to the school. Once the fees are paid, the student will receive his/her uniform.

Students are to wear the school issued uniform at all interscholastic events.

## **Transportation to and from Contests**

The school provides bus transportation, or a suitable substitute, to and from most “away” contests. All team members are expected to travel to these contests using the school provided transportation in order to compete in the event. Exceptions are made to this rule in only the most extreme cases. A student-athlete who does not ride the bus with the team without approval will not participate in the event.

Parents wishing to transport their child home to or from an away event must fill out the transportation waiver Forms Document for their team. This can be found on the Athletic Home Page. Please understand that coaches are permitted to require all team members to be on the bus on the way home.

## **Communication**

While interscholastic athletics can provide some of the most rewarding and inspiring moments in students’ lives, there can also be times when things may not go the way a parent or child wishes. If a conflict or issue arises during a season, it is imperative that it be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner so that the concern can be resolved promptly. Both parenting and coaching are extremely

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difficult jobs. Open communication and clear expectations will enable both groups to work together to provide a greater benefit to the student-athletes.

In many instances, a conversation between a parent and the student-athlete can resolve most questions or concerns. The student-athlete who is in attendance daily at practices and games should be able to address rules and roles of the program.

If this conversation does not resolve the problem or answer the question, the next step is for the student-athlete and coach to discuss the concern. Many times, a misunderstanding can easily be resolved with this direct conversation.

If it is necessary for a parent and coach to meet to discuss a concern, the parent should contact the coach to schedule a meeting. Please do not attempt to confront a coach before, after, or during a practice or game. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach and would not promote a positive resolution. It should be understood that playing time, team strategy, play calling, and other student-athletes are not topics of discussion.

If none of the above avenues resolve the concern, then a meeting between the student, parent, coach, and Athletic Director will be scheduled.

**Contact the Athletic Director immediately at any time in the case of an emergency or a severe violation of safety or any rules or regulations.**

## **SPORTS PHYSICALS & RISK FACTORS IN SPORTS**

Participation in sports involves a certain degree of risk for injury. Such physical injury can occur in any type of sports activity and can vary in nature. Athletic injuries can run from minor injuries, such as bruises and scrapes, to more serious injuries such as fractures, dislocations, concussions, paralysis and even death.

### **Sports physicals**

All student-athletes must have a current sports physical on file with the Athletic Office. Physicals for returning student athletes must be dated within two years of tryouts. All incoming students and those students who have not participated in athletics previously must submit a copy of a physical that is dated on or after July 1<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year (For example, if the sport will be played during the 2024-2025 school year, the physical must be dated on or after 7/1/2023). It is recommended students submit recent physicals when they receive them. Physicals should be uploaded directly on the registration page in **Final Forms**.

### **Injuries**

The Athletic Director, in consultation with the Athletic Trainer, reserves the right to withhold any student from participating in any school sponsored practices and/or contests, if it is determined that student is not in full health.

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## **Return to Play from Injury**

The Merrimack School District contracts the services of The Center for Physical Therapy and Exercise to provide Athletic Trainer services for each of the high school athletic programs. The Athletic Trainers are trained and certified to provide the very best care for our student-athletes. All high school student-athletes who suffer an injury or who feel discomfort must be evaluated by the Athletic Trainer prior to returning to their sport. Any time a student-athlete visits the emergency room or a doctor due to potential injury, that student must provide documentation from the doctor they visited, or their primary care physician stating they are safe to return to said sport or activity.

## **Treatment of Head Injuries**

Merrimack High School follows the NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sport. Even if a family doctor clears an athlete from a concussion, that athlete must still go through the Merrimack High School concussion protocol. The clearance from the doctor begins the return to play protocol. Our goal is to keep each athlete healthy and get them back to competition as safely and quickly as possible.

All athletes participating in contact sports will have the option to take a pre-concussion cognitive assessment test (ImPACT) before the team's sports season begins.

### **Concussion Resources:**

- NFHS Guidelines for Management of Concussions in Sports
  - [https://www.nfhs.org/media/1018446/suggested\\_guidelines\\_management\\_concussion\\_april\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nfhs.org/media/1018446/suggested_guidelines_management_concussion_april_2017.pdf)
- NFHS Learn Courses
  - <https://www.nfhslearn.com/courses?searchText=Concussion>
  - Concussion in Sports
  - Concussion for Students
- REAPsm the Benefits of Good Concussion Management
  - <https://www.nfhs.org/media/1015690/reapaugust2015.pdf>

## **COLLEGE & NCAA GUIDANCE**

One of the most important decisions facing high school students is what to do with their lives after high school. The Merrimack High School Athletic Department and coaching staff are willing and eager to assist all students with this extremely important decision.

Prospective student-athletes who plan to participate in intercollegiate athletics at an NCAA Division I or Division II institution must register on-line with the NCAA Eligibility Center. You may access information by visiting the Eligibility website at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). It is extremely important that prospective student-athletes understand the NCAA Freshman-Eligibility Standards.

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## Eligibility Timeline:

- **Grade 9**
  - Register for a free Profile Page account at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) for information on NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.
  - Find your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses at [www.eligibilitycenter.org/courselist](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org/courselist) to ensure you are taking the right courses and earn the best grades possible!
- **Grade 10**
  - If you are being actively recruited by an NCAA school and have a Profile Page account, transition it to the right Certification account.
  - Monitor the task list in your NCAA Eligibility Center account for next steps.
  - At the end of the school year, ask your high school counselor from each school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.
  - If you fall behind academically, ask your high school counselor for help finding approved courses you can take.
- **Grade 11**
  - Ensure your sports participation information is correct in your Eligibility Center account.
  - Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are on track to complete the required number of NCAA-approved core courses and graduate on time with your class.
  - At the end of the school year, ask your high school counselor from each school you have attended to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.
- **Grade 12**
  - Request your final amateurism certification beginning April 1 (fall enrollees) or Oct. 1 (winter/spring enrollees) in your Eligibility Center account at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).
  - Complete your final NCAA-approved core courses as you prepare for graduation.
  - After you graduate, ask your high school counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

Students should consult the most current list of Merrimack High School courses approved by the NCAA. To access the current version of our high school's list, you may visit [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). You will need our High School code, **300405**, in order to access the list of approved courses. You are encouraged to check to see if you qualify for participation in Division I or II athletics.

Please note that Summer School courses may not meet the eligibility requirements for the NCAA regardless of the level they are taken at. Please refer to the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete for information regarding credit recovery programs.

**It is the responsibility of the student and parents/guardians to meet the NCAA guidelines for athletic participation. The Merrimack High School Counseling and Athletic Departments are available to answer any questions you might have during the process.**

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## College Signings

As we encourage students to be multi-sport athletes in high school, we also encourage them to pursue athletics at the collegiate level. There are many opportunities at a variety of different levels of play for all student-athletes. A recent change by the NCAA has eliminated the National Letter of Intent (NLI) program, replacing it with a scholarship agreement directly from the institution. Athletes will continue to sign a document and commit to colleges. Moving forward, written offers of athletics aid will replace the NLI. These are agreements (encompassing both financial aid and scholarships) that ensure the school will provide you with the athletic aid they promise.

National Signing Day will still occur, but what was once called National Letter of Intent Day or NLI Signing Day will no longer exist.

Once a student-athlete signs a written offer of athletic aid, other schools are prohibited from communicating with that student-athlete.

We will hold two Signing Days for students, one in the fall for Division I and II schools and one in the spring for Division III (and any remaining Div. I and Div. II schools). If you want to participate, please look for information posted on the athletic website once dates are set, and provide a written offer of athletic aid.

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# **NHIAA POLICIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS**

In addition to Merrimack High School policies stated above, there are other NHIAA rules which have been summarized below in an attempt to highlight the most important rules and regulations. If the following information does not answer specific questions, or if there is a concern, please refer to the NHIAA Handbook (which can be viewed at [www.nhiaa.org](http://www.nhiaa.org)) or contact the Merrimack High School Athletic Office.

## **Age (NHIAA By-Law Article II Section 1)**

A student must be less than 19 years of age prior to September 1 of the current school year.

## **Eight Semester Rule (NHIAA By-Law Article II Section 3)**

A student shall be eligible for interscholastic high school competition for no more than eight consecutive semesters beyond the eighth grade. This rule applies regardless of participation in athletics during that time.

## **Transfer Students (NHIAA By-Law Article II Section 4)**

The rules governing transfer students entering the Merrimack School District from another school are governed by the NHIAA. Students who transfer into the Merrimack School District must be declared eligible prior to participating in a contest. Information regarding the athletic eligibility of all students transferring to the Merrimack School District should be requested from the Athletic Department Office.

## **Non-School Competition (NHIAA By-Law Article II Section 7)**

Members of a school team are prevented from missing any portion of a high school practice or competition to practice or compete with an out-of-school team. This includes non-school tournaments, showcases, combines, or other athletic events. Whenever a conflict arises between the high school team practice/competition and an out-of-school practice/competition on the same day, the high school team practice/competition must be honored by the student-athlete. Priority must be always given to the high school team, its practices, and its contests unless a waiver has been granted by the principal and athletic director. It is expressly understood that waivers shall not be granted on a regular basis and shall only be granted in extraordinary circumstances.

**Penalties:** Any student-athlete who violates this rule, unless a waiver has been granted, for the first time shall be declared ineligible for the next four (4) consecutive interscholastic events or three (3) weeks of a season in which the student-athlete is a participant, whichever is greater. This Penalty is effective from the date of his or her last participation in a high school sport. Any student-athlete who violates this rule a second or subsequent time shall be declared ineligible for participation in any high school sport for the balance of the school year.

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