

MICHIGAN LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETICS

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK



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HOME OF THE
TITANS

**SUCCESS IS DOING YOUR BEST
WITH THE TALENTS THE GOOD
LORD GAVE YOU.**

michiganlutheran.org/activities/athletics

MEMBER OF:



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MLHS Student-Parent Athletic Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Athletic Department of Michigan Lutheran High School. Our goal is that your experience with Titan Nation athletics will be successful, positive, and rewarding. Titan sports will offer meaningful learning opportunities that are not otherwise offered in the classroom.

This handbook has been prepared to help you better understand the function, purpose, policies, and expectations of our athletic program.

Philosophy of Titan Athletics

The athletic program of Michigan Lutheran High School is an extension of the total educational curriculum. As such, the foundation is the Word of God, and our motto is **Christian education through athletics**. The coaches that direct the teams, the student athletes that participate, and the parents of athletes will strive to be guided by this foundation.

Success is not measured alone by wins and losses. Success is rather measured by doing one's best with the talents that the good Lord has given the individual. The display of the Christian values of love, respect, faithfulness, service, maximum effort, and sportsmanship are equally valuable in both victory and defeat.

A Message to Parents

Your child has chosen to participate in an endeavor that is both difficult and rewarding. Membership on a team affects the entire family in many ways. Schedules become difficult and injuries are possible. Over the course of a season there will be times of frustration and times of great joy. Your child will learn to cope with difficulties, strive to attain goals, be a good team member, and accept victory or defeat with the understanding that God is in control.

This undertaking requires a partnership between parents and coach. All parties involved have obligations and responsibilities. Communication that is done in a God pleasing way is extremely helpful. It is understood that there are high expectations placed on a Titan student athlete. Support of the coach is necessary for athletes to learn self-discipline, accountability, good training habits, and preparation for athletic contests.

Encourage your child to persevere through difficulties rather than quitting. Do not try to be their coach by offering critique after a game, but offer encouragement and let them know that you are proud of them regardless of their statistical results.

Keep in mind the big picture. Your child will learn life lessons through sports while competing with other Christians, and supported by other Christians. As your child becomes an adult and many years pass, he or she will remember their teammates and their team experience with sentimental joy.

A Message to Student Athletes

You have chosen to participate in Titan athletics. Always remember that team membership is a privilege and that with privilege comes responsibility. This handbook will give you an understanding of these responsibilities.

We hold our coaches to high standards. Every member of every team will be treated with respect and our coaches are expected to teach in a positive, constructive manner. Every coach is expected to prepare their team with a game plan that could lead to success if executed. Every coach is expected to be a model of sportsmanship and to win or lose with grace.

You will be coached to maximize the development of the talents that were given to you by God. You will be coached to have a “team first” attitude and to accept your role on the team. Your coaches will not quit on you or your team and you will be expected to persevere through tough times. Your coaches are not perfect and you will be expected to communicate with them when you have concerns.

Sports do not come with a guarantee of success on the scoreboard. The road is tough but the rewards can be tremendous. Know that the measure of an athlete is not about getting knocked down, but the willingness to get up. Do your best, respect your coaches, and be thankful for your high school sports opportunity. At the end of your high school experience you will be a Titan for Life!

Academic Priorities

Players are to be first and foremost students at MLHS. The academic eligibility policy is found in the school handbook. Players are student athletes and, as such, success in the classroom must come along with success on the field or court. When athletic ineligibility takes place, many people are let down. Parents can help players evaluate time commitments of various activities so that players can become good stewards of their time.

A full day of attendance is required in order to participate in practice or games. Exceptions can be appealed to the principal. The full policy is in the school handbook.

Practice Expectations

Athletes are expected to report on time to practice, in proper practice clothes. The foundation of personal and team success will come in practice. Improvement of a team comes from everyone being at each practice and performing at a high level to make good fundamentals permanent. It should be the goal of every player on a team to be at all practices. If for a valid reason, an athlete must miss practice they should **excuse to the coach in person. Sending a message via another player or texting your coach is normally not acceptable.** Emergencies, of course, can happen. In this case, parental explanation afterwards is proper, and the absence can be excused. Each athlete is an equal fractional part of the team whole. Therefore a strong commitment for all players to attend all practices is necessary for team progress and to facilitate practice planning.

Unexcused practices (and games) should never happen, and will lead to loss of playing time and could lead to dismissal from the team. All missed practices, excused or unexcused, can understandably lead to loss of playing time. In the case of excused absences, playing time may be reduced. This is not discipline, but the normal progression of preparation for the next game. When a player is absent from practice, someone else is given the responsibility of replacing that player and may be given the opportunity to show the evidence of that preparation in a game situation.

It is a little appreciated fact that the sport fundamentals are learned through reps in practice and the product of these practice repetitions are displayed in games.

Performing at a High Level

Performing at a high level starts with an established bed time that allows for 8 hours or more of sleep a night. Parents, help your son or daughter prioritize the things in their life. There is usually a limit as to how many activities can be handled at once and still result in playing at a high level. Every family situation is different and parents are ultimately in charge of their children's lives. But seasons are long, and students can end up overloaded and frustrated when they desire to do everything. No teenager can perform at an athletic high level for very long if they do not have enough sleep or weekly downtime.

Pre-Participation Paperwork

Before the first team practice, parents and player must complete the following:

1. Signed training rules.
2. A physical dated after April 15 must be on file in the athletic office.
3. "Permission to treat" must be signed.
4. "Permission to participate" must be signed.
5. Agreement to fundraise \$100 in profit or donate \$100 must be signed.
6. Agreement must be signed to work the prescribed number of times at games (Example: ticket taker, concession, score table) or to "cash out".
7. Dorm students are excused from #5 and #6, but must pay a fee before participation.

All these steps are combined into one document entitled Sports Tryout Permission (STP). Exact directions are on the form. Signatures can be done electronically or on paper. The STP form must be completed, processed by the athletic office, and hand delivered to the coach before participation can begin. Forms can be found online at michiganlutheran.org.

Injuries and Insurance

Coaches are expected to apply common sense first aid in the event of an injury but to do no more, unless it is an emergency. In the case of a real or suspected emergency, coaches will not hesitate to call 911. All head coaches are certified in CPR. An AED is available in the gym, near the front school entrance, and in the outdoor concession building.

Coaches can be expected to call the parents in the case of an injury. Coaches also will have with them the permission to treat forms in case the parents are not available and the services of medical personnel are needed.

Michigan Lutheran has an agreement with Southwest Medical Center for Orthopaedics and Sport Medicine (269-428-3500) to treat ML athletes in 24 hours after a request.

ML has supplemental accident insurance for injuries suffered while participating in a school activity. To qualify it must be an injury and not a condition. If the family has insurance, be sure to follow the family policy concerning networks, etc. The ML insurance will cover what is not covered by the family's insurance. Obtain an insurance form from the athletic office and begin treatment in a timely fashion.

Supplemental insurance for concussion treatment is available from the MHSAA. Forms are at mhsaa.com or at the ML athletic office. A specific form must be signed by a Dr. before an athlete can return to participation.

As a general rule, if an athlete is injured to an extent that a Doctor is needed, then a note from a Dr. is required before participation can be resumed.

Athletic Awards

Athletes will earn an award upon successful completion of a full season without a training rules violation.

JV awards: Each year on a team, the award is a certificate, and a pin (service bar). A “jv chenille” is also awarded the first time that a player is on a jv team.

VARSITY awards: Each year on a varsity team, the award is a certificate, and a pin that signifies the particular sport. A “varsity chenille” is also awarded for the first varsity team participation.

Team awards such as MVP, and Best Defender, may be awarded to varsity players. The coaching staff has the final say on these awards, but may seek a team vote and recommendation for some awards from the entire team.

Varsity head coaches will nominate players from their team for all-conference awards. The number of nominations that are available to each team depends on the team’s finish in the final conference standings. The number of nominations can be as many as 5, or as little as one. A ballot is prepared by the BCS commissioner of the sport and a secret ballot is taken by all head coaches in the conference. Coaches may not vote for their own players. Those selected to the first team receive a BCS medal.

All varsity head coaches belong to the state coaches’ organization for their sport. They follow state guidelines for the various all-state awards. These awards and the process for determining all-state will vary according to the sport.

The winners of Legacy Awards such as the Gruetzmacher Sr. Athlete Award, are determined by a secret ballot taken by the ML varsity head coaches.

School Cancellation and Practice/Games

In the event of a school cancellation due to weather, all practices and games are normally canceled for the day.

If school is canceled after classes have begun, all practices and games are normally canceled for the day.

Uniforms

All Titan athletes are issued a standard game uniform. Some sports may also issue practice uniforms, travel bags, and warmups. Game uniforms and warmups are to be worn on game days only. Team travel bags or backpacks are to be used, also, only on game days.

All issued gear must be returned to the coach at the end of the season. Do not turn in uniforms and other gear to the athletic office, the school office, or leave gear in the locker room. Your coach is obligated to collect all gear. Please respect that. If uniforms, etc. are not turned in, the replacement cost will be billed to the parents.

Lockers and Locker Rooms

ML has been blessed with completely refurbished locker rooms. This gift is to be appreciated by the following:

1. Keep all belongings in your locker and keep your locker locked with a school lock. If large baseball/softball bags do not fit in a locker, they may be left on the floor, zipped up, and out of the way of traffic.
2. There is to be no ball bouncing, dribbling, passing against the wall, or similar activities in the locker room. For pregame activity, a coach may allow some activity with very specific guidelines.
3. Leave the locker room cleaner than the way that you found it. This applies to away trips, also.
4. Absolutely no horseplay is allowed in the locker room.
5. No phones, or any recording devices can be used in a locker room. Violators of this rule can face serious consequences.
6. White boards and bulletin boards are for the use of coaches.
7. We have been given a gift of first class locker rooms. First class behavior is expected. Respect your facility.

Non-School Teams

An athlete may compete on non-school teams as long as the non-school team is not playing the same sport as the athlete's school team during the MHSAA season. This is an MHSAA regulation. Otherwise, competing on a non-school team is a parental decision.

An athlete owes loyalty and allegiance to the school team of which he or she is a member.

Cutting policy

All students are encouraged to try out for an athletic team. Recent history does not show any students being cut from teams, however this is a possibility depending on the sport and the number of students trying out. If cutting is necessary, skill level and attitude are the determining factors.

Game Day Procedures

All teams will dress up, a cut above normal, as prescribed by the coach, on game days. Some teams may change into uniforms before leaving the school for an away contest because they need to arrive dressed to play.

If teams travel in dress clothes, all athletes are to be completely dressed in their dress clothes on the way to the game, while at the game site, on the way home, and at all stops while traveling.

If teams travel in school uniforms, the same rules apply. All athletes are to be fully dressed in their travel suits on the way, while at the game site, on the way home, and at any stops along the way. Home and away, travel suits and uniforms are always to be worn as intended.

All ML teams should look first class while traveling.

At the completion of a game, uniforms are not to be removed until the player is in the locker room.

Dual Sport Athletes

ML athletes may compete on two ML school teams at the same time. Parents should carefully consider the responsibilities and stress of competing on two varsity teams at a high level.. To be a dual sport athlete, the following is necessary.

1. The athlete must get a Dual Sport Contract from the athletic office.
2. The contract must list the requirements of both coaches and have their signatures.
3. The athlete must select a primary sport. The other sport will be the secondary sport.
4. Follow the directions on the contract and have all parties sign indicating their agreement.
5. Take the completed form to the athletic director for the final signature.
6. The contract must be completed before the athlete plays a game for either sport.

Playing Time

There is a difference in playing time among the different levels of a sport. As a player progresses from kindergarten to 12th grade, the emphasis and the goals of the different levels change. The expectation of player skill increases as the player gets older and progresses up the ladder. A level of play for younger students in grade school may emphasize instruction and participation to the exclusion of even keeping score. The goal of this level is usually equal playing time. Equal playing time is less important as a player moves to higher levels. When the athlete reaches the varsity level, years later, the expectation of acquired skill is much greater. The varsity coach will use discretion to play the players that will enable the team to compete at the highest level with the greatest opportunity for victory.

Some sports have rules that limit free substitution. This can put constraints on a coach's ability to play everyone in a close game.

At ML, on the jv level, a jv player can expect to get into every game pending attitude and practice attendance. The actual amount of time is up to the coach and is according to the situation and the player's talents.

The ML jv and varsity coaches are encouraged, under normal circumstances, to "empty the bench" at the point in a game when the outcome is obviously decided.

Some sports at ML do not field a jv team. This can result in 9th and 10th graders having membership on a varsity team, but only possessing jv level ability. This can be difficult for players and parents as younger, somewhat unskilled players, have to “wait their turn.” Parents are encouraged to remember that all players on the team are benefiting from practicing at a varsity level and being instructed at every practice by a varsity level coach.

Players that are dissatisfied with their playing time should talk to their coach, and ask what skills need to be improved upon in order to get more playing time. Parents are reminded that playing time in high school sports is the prerogative of the coach.

Parental Support of Titan Athletics

Parental support of the athletic program at Michigan Lutheran has always been an important part of its success. Parents are encouraged to support all members of the team as well as all members of the coaching staff as they work toward a common goal. Parental support comes in many forms: prayers for the God-pleasing use of talents of athletes and coaches, cheerful volunteer help throughout the season, monetary support, and words of encouragement. These are all very much appreciated.

There will be times when issues arise that give concern to parents. When this occurs, let these principles be the guide:

DON'T: Approach the coach immediately before or after a game.

DON'T: Raise the issue via email or texting.

DON'T: Criticize others publicly or on social media.

DON'T: Remain silent until after the season.

DON'T" Encourage players to quit.

DON'T: Skip steps in ML's policy.

DO: Pray for God to bless our teams, the athletes, and those who lead them.

DO: Pray for guidance in tactfully raising concerns.

DO: Wait 24 hours.

DO: Find an appropriate time to have a face to face “sit down” with the coach.

DO: Follow school policy. This is spelled out in the Athletic Training Rules and the school handbook.

DO: Have confidence that the coach will listen and treat the situation with professionalism.

Player Support of Titan Athletics

The nature of a team sport requires that all teammates work together toward a common goal. This cannot be accomplished when team harmony is disrupted by one team member criticizing the efforts of another team member, or by being jealous of another team member. Also, if a teammate makes a mistake or performs poorly, encouragement of your teammate rather than criticism is helpful. Criticism of coaching decisions and second-guessing strategy only undercuts the team's confidence in their coach. In no way will criticism of coaching promote team success. A Titan athlete can demonstrate his or her support for the team by adopting the following guidelines for success:

1. Respect officials and learn to adapt to different officials during games..
2. Honor the team rules.
3. Take care of your classroom education.
4. Come to practice in a good state of mind and physically ready to practice at a high level. "Practice like a Champion."
5. Prepare mind and body for "game time." "Play like a Champion."
6. Be loyal to your team and your coaches.
7. Respect your opponents and **do not trash talk on social media** or during games.
8. Work at sharpening your fundamental sport skills.
9. Remind and encourage teammates in a tactful way to keep a positive, God-pleasing team focus.
10. Pray for the strength to accomplish these guidelines.

Transportation

Athletes are required to ride school transportation to games. After an athletic contest the parents may sign out and have their child ride home with them. The parents may also designate in writing another **adult** that can transport their child.

On exceptional occasions, when events take place on weekends and/or take place very close to the student's home, **coaches may authorize** alternative transportation arrangements provided parents grant written consent.

There may be times when the school is unable to transport athletes with school transportation to games because drivers, or vehicles are not available. In

these circumstances, the team will be transported to games in private vehicles driven by insured drivers of at least 21 years old. The arrangements will be made by the coach.

When a team practices at an off-campus site, the players may be transported by licensed drivers. Any transportation of this kind requires written permission from the parents. The coach will be in charge of gathering the permissions. Permission can be authorized by a parent for the entire season. If leaving from school, the players will be led in a caravan with their coach leading the way.

A transportation fee for each sport is assessed by the school to help defray the cost of transportation. This is not an athletic fee. This fee is paid to the finance office and is deposited to the general school budget.

Release Time

In the event of early dismissal from class for athletic travel, athletes should get their assignments for the next day. It is extremely important that athletes are in school the entire day after a contest. Athletes are to be ready for the next day's classes.

MHSAA

A good resource for state regulations is found at mhsaa.com. On the home page, scroll to the bottom and find "forms and resources." Next, under "mhsaa publications," click on "coaches guidebook." This contains a shortened version of the important mhsaa regulations.

Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship at athletic contests, home or away, can be summarized as this: **LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!** The Titan Nation is held to a high standard, and it is everyone's responsibility to meet and exceed that standard. To be clear, students and fans of MLHS are expected:

1. To never boo.
2. To cheer for our team.
3. To not address either team's coaches.
4. To not address either team's players.
5. To respect the decisions of the officials.
6. Show appreciation for a "great play" by a player of either team.
7. Stay for a trophy presentation and applaud both teams.
8. Remind, as necessary, other Titan fans to take the high road.

Michigan Lutheran High School

Athletic Training Code

The MLHS athletic program exists as an integral part of the total curriculum. It exists as a tool for Christian education, and as such, the athletic leaders seek to prepare youth for a life of Christian service through the unique lessons that can be learned in athletics. Membership on an ML team is a privilege and carries with it certain responsibilities. Compliance with these rules is a responsibility of the athlete and his/her parents. This training code has been ratified by the MLHS Board of Regents. This code is in effect 12 months a year.

Before signing, players and parents are asked to read these rules and consequences carefully and to ask for explanations if any points are not understood. Signatures on this form indicate that player and parents understand the rules, intend to follow them, and are willing to accept the consequences of any infractions.

I. Alcohol/Tobacco

An athlete is expected to abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, and other look-a-likes. A first offense will result in a suspension of three (3) competition dates. A second offense will result in a suspension of six (6) competition dates. A third offense will result in a suspension from sports for one (1) calendar year. Infractions are cumulative over four years.

II. Drugs/ Marijuana

An athlete is expected to abstain from the use of marijuana and non prescribed drugs. An athlete is expected to properly use all over-the-counter chemicals. A first offense will result in a suspension of six (6) competition dates. A second offense will result in a suspension of twelve (12) competition dates. A third offense will result in a suspension from sports for one (1) calendar year. Infractions are cumulative over four years.

III. Suspensions

If a suspension can not be completed in one season, the suspension will carry over to the next season in which the athlete participates. A suspension normally means that an athlete continues to practice with the team, attends all team functions, and is on the bench during games in street clothes. The athlete shows a repentant attitude during the suspension. An athlete forfeits all team awards and the athletic letter with any violation of I. or II.

IV. Practices and Game Excuses

Athletes are expected to be at all practices and games. Permission to be excused or to be late should be obtained from the coach beforehand. Some examples of excused absences or tardies are the following: an ML school related event, driver's test, college visits, doctor appointment, a school office excuse for illness. The coach should be consulted in the case of injury or minor illness. Vacations and hunting trips are generally unexcused unless they are family outings. Absences and tardies due to non-MLHS activities are generally unexcused.

An athlete will lose playing time because of an unexcused absence from a practice or game. The coach will determine the validity of the excuse. Excuses should always be obtained from the coach beforehand. An unexcused absence from a game will result in a one game suspension.

V. Performance Readiness

All athletes are expected to be ready to compete at all practices and games at a high level. Athletes are expected to arrive at practices and games free from injuries and with the ability to compete with energy and enthusiasm.

VI. Dual Sport Participation

Athletes may compete in two MLHS sports at the same time. A “dual sports participation” form must be completed and turned in before the athlete competes in a contest. Athletes may participate in non-school sports and activities at the discretion of their parents. ML practices and games will take priority over non-ML sports and activities. Athletes may NOT participate in a non-school sport at the same time that they are participating in the same ML sport.

VII. Parties

When an athlete is present at a party where the training code is being broken, the athlete’s reputation suffers and the team’s reputation suffers. Because of this, the athlete’s presence at a party where the training code is being broken is considered a violation. An athlete should be careful which parties he or she attends. When an athlete attends a party, it is his or her responsibility to know if the training code is being broken or not. If there is a problem, or if there is any doubt, the athlete should leave immediately.

VIII. Loyalty

Athletes are to exhibit loyalty to their school, teammates and coaches. Criticism in public or on social media is not acceptable.

IX. Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship is a great way to let our light shine. Michigan Lutheran High School is renowned as a great example of good sportsmanship. Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. As an example to their son or daughter, we expect parents to cheer for ML teams in a positive fashion. Cheering against opponents or loudly disagreeing with officials or coaches should not happen. All those connected with the game should be treated with courtesy. Adults are asked to gently correct others who are exhibiting poor sportsmanship. Booing should never happen.

X. Concerns and Complaints

Concerns and complaints should be directed to the coach first and handled in the light of Scripture and in accordance with MLHS policy as outlined in the student hand- book. The correct order of due process is the following:

Steps in the process should not be skipped.

1. A sit down private conference with the coach.

2. If not resolved, a sit down conference with the Athletic Director and the coach.
3. If not resolved, a sit down conference with the Principal, Athletic Director, and the coach.
4. 4.If not resolved, the Administrative Council will direct the procedure for a hearing before the Board of Regents.

We have read The Athletic Training Code, and our signatures below indicate our pledge to abide by it and our understanding that the compliance of both students and parents is necessary for the privilege of team membership

Athlete's signature _____

Parent's signature _____

Parent's signature _____

date _____

Board of Regents 6-29-16

