Mount Carmel Area School District
Athletic Department
2025-2026 Parent & Student Handbook

600 W 5th Street, Mount Carmel PA 17851

Ms. Cassandra Niglio
Director of Athletics
(570) 205-8526
niglioc@mca.k12.pa.us

Mr. Pete Cheddar
Superintendent
(570) 205-2577
cheddarp@mca.k12.pa.us

Mr. Aaron Domanski
High School Principal
(570) 339-7257
domanskia@mca.k12.pa.us

Mr. John Darrah
JH Principal
(570) 339-7257
darrahj@mca.k12.pa.us

Table of Contents

Message to Parents and Students……...3
Requirements for Participation…….4
Athletic Department Policies…….5
Physical Examination……..5
Scholastic Eligibility Requirements…….....6
Hazing…….....7
Bullying……...8
Social Media Awareness…….9
Training Rules and Regulations……...9
Athletic Trainer Guidelines and Protocols…….....10
Prohibitions……..12
Changing Sports/Same Season……..12
Dual Sports Seasons……..12
Financial Obligations and Equipment……13
Vacation Policy/Travel……13
Insurance Policy/Procedures……14
Residence……..15
Transfers……15
Athletic Awards/Letter Requirements……16

Message to Parents and Students

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Student-Athlete:

Welcome to Mount Carmel Area Athletics! We hope this handbook provides you with all of the information that will accommodate you in making your athletic experience a positive one at MCA. The athletic program at Mount Carmel Area has always been known for its rich tradition of pride and excellence. The sports foundations developed in the former schools of Mount Carmel, Mount Carmel Township, Kulpmont and Mt. Carmel Catholic have all contributed to the Mount Carmel Area Red Tornado success in its scholastic sports programs.

We wholeheartedly believe that the key to athletic success comes from a well-rounded experience for all of our student-athletes. The concepts of BODY, MIND, and SPIRIT are integral aspects of our sports programs on all levels. Our athletes must develop all three of these personal qualities in order to succeed in the classroom, as well as on the field of competition, and most importantly, to have success in life's endeavors.

Be it Fall, Winter, or Spring, our goal for each student-athlete who displays the Red Tornado on their uniform is to spotlight sportsmanship, demonstrate work ethic, and be a positive example of what it takes to be a Mount Carmel Area Red Tornado.

This handbook is provided to assist you and your child throughout their athletic career at MCA. Please take the time to read each section thoroughly. When finished, please sign the back page which indicates that you and the student-athlete have read the handbook, and understand what is contained within. Once again, we welcome you to MCA Athletics!

Sincerely,

Cassandra Niglio
Athletic Director

Requirements for Participation

Please note that no student will be eligible to participate in any sport at the Mount Carmel Area School District until the following are completed:

A. Prospective athletes must meet with the Athletic Administrator and/or designee prior to the first day of participation to cover rules and regulations found in the athletic handbook.

B. A current physical must be on file in the athletic office prior to the start of the season.

C. Emergency Medical Form needs to be completed online.

D. PIAA Academic eligibility requirements must be satisfied.

E. Student Courses must be completed. They include:

- Sportsmanship
  Link: https://nfhslearn.com/
  Each athlete will email or print their completed course certificate to their head coach. It is then the responsibility of the head coach to track completion and notify the athletic director of team completion.

- Hazing Prevention For Students
  Link: **Hazing Prevention for Students"**
  https://nfhslearn.com/courses/hazing-prevention-for-students
  Each athlete will email or print their completed course certificate to their head coach. It is then the responsibility of the head coach to track completion and notify the athletic director of team completion.

Athletic Department Policies

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement of Athletic Policies:
At the beginning of each school year, the Athletic Handbook and all necessary forms and information for participating athletes can be found on the District website: www.mca.k12.pa.us.

Physical Examination
Physical examination forms for all participants shall be signed by a physician, the participant, and by a parent or legal guardian, and must be on file in the Athletic Office before any candidate for a team may participate in any way. These forms necessitate the physician's certification of the individual's physical fitness and are valid for one calendar school year. Students are encouraged to get their physicals during the summer months. Physicals are valid for one calendar year from the date of the exam. (Form can be found on the district's website.)

Physicals will be offered by a licensed physician at a set rate at the high school. This is done as a convenience to the athlete and they are not required to participate in this procedure. An athlete may go to any licensed physician to have the PIAA Physical requirement complete, but must be done prior to the beginning of their sport season on an approved form.

In the event of a student participating in more than one sport during the school term, parents and guardians are reminded to sign the physical form in all sports which their child is participating in. In the event, the form is already turned in, they may retrieve it and return it signed for another sport. However they cannot participate until it is returned to the Athletic Office.

Scholastic Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at Mount Carmel Area, grades 7-12, all student-athletes will be required to meet certain standards established by the PIAA. These standards are as follows:

A. Age - To be eligible to participate in grades 10 through 12, you must not have reached your 19th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year. Where you will participate only in grades 7 and 8, you may not have reached your 15th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year; where you will participate only in grades 7 through 9, you may not have reached your 16th birthday by June 30 immediately preceding the school year.

B. Attendance - You must be enrolled in and in full-time attendance at Mount Carmel Area or be home-schooled. You are eligible only at the school at which you are enrolled or, if a home-schooled student, at a public school in the public school district in which you reside. If you are a student enrolled in either a Charter School or Cyber Charter School, you should consult with your Principal to determine the school at which you are eligible. If you are absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days, you will lose your eligibility until you attend school for a total of 45 school days following your 20th day of absence.

C. Academic and Curricular Requirements - All student-athletes must be passing at least four full-credit subjects, or the equivalent. The Athletic Department will run grading reports every Wednesday of each week. From Wednesday to Sunday, student-athletes will be given a warning period in regards to their grades. If the student fails to meet this requirement by the beginning of the following week on Monday morning, student-athletes will then lose their eligibility immediately for the next entire week.

D. Discipline (Mt. Carmel Area Policy not PIAA) - Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, a student who is suspended (ISS or OSS) or expelled from school shall be ineligible to participate in Extracurricular Activities for a period of time not less than the duration of the suspension or expulsion. *(Note: Suspension would carry over weekends as well. For example, if serving a multi day suspension that involves a Friday and Monday, the student/athlete would be ineligible to participate in extracurricular events over the weekend.)* The athletic head coach

reserves the right to add additional team consequences in conjunction with the Athletic Director and High School Principal.

Hazing

Within MCA School District Policy 247:

Hazing is not an accepted practice by the Mount Carmel Area School District and will not be tolerated or condoned in the athletic program. The respective school administrator and athletic director will deal with any instances of hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational and athletic goals of the district and are prohibited at all times.

Hazing is defined as an act when a person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly, for the purpose of initiating, admitting or affiliating a student with an organization, or for the purpose of continuing or enhancing membership or status in an organization, causes, coerces or forces a student to do any of the following:[1]

1. Violate federal or state criminal law.

2. Consume any food, liquid, alcoholic liquid, drug or other substance which subjects the student to a risk of emotional or physical harm.

3. Endure brutality of a physical nature, including whipping, beating, branding, calisthenics or exposure to the elements.

4. Endure brutality of a mental nature, including activity adversely affecting the mental health or dignity of the individual, sleep deprivation, exclusion from social contact or conduct that could result in extreme embarrassment.

5. Endure brutality of a sexual nature.

6. Endure any other activity that creates a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to the student.

More egregious acts of Hazing are defined as Aggravated Hazing and are included in the MCASD Board Policy 247.

- “Each athlete will complete the following course on the National Federation of High School Sports website before participating in any sport at MCA each school

year. This course needs to completed once per year and does not need to be completed multiple times if the athlete participates in multiple sports:
“Hazing Prevention for Students”
https://nfhslearn.com/courses/hazing-prevention-for-students
Each athlete will email or print their completed course certificate to their head coach. It is the responsibility of the head coach to track completion and notify the athletic director of team completion.”

Bullying

Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with a student’s education.

2. Creating a threatening environment
.
3. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school day

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying. Complaints of bullying shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. Confidentiality of all parties shall be maintained, consistent with the district’s legal and investigative obligations. No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of bullying.

Please refer to District Policy 249 for a further definition of bullying.

What to Do When You Experience or See Bullying

The intent of our high school is to eliminate bullying altogether, but at times, it still occurs. Should a student feel bullied or witness bullying, he/she should immediately report it to a teacher, Administrator, or any adult in the building and filling out a Bullying Incident Form. The bullying form can be found on the main district website at www.mca.k12.pa.us. The district employee will ensure that the matter is addressed and or the principals are made aware of the situation.

SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS –

1. Students should not post identifying information such as address, age, email address, or telephone number.
2. A student may not use school-based social media to violate the Mount Carmel Area School District's Code of Conduct.
3. A student will not use social media to harass or bully others in any way.
4. A student must respect the privacy of others at all times.
5. A student must understand that there will be consequences for misuse of the school-based or personal social media.
6. The misuse of personal or home-based social media, depending on its potential effect on the students/others, may result in further disciplinary actions.
7. Students may not post anything inappropriate (ie. reference to use or promotion of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, use of inappropriate language, racism, harassment, fighting) to their personal social media sites (or any social media sites that can be associated or traced back to the specific student athlete.)
8. Students and parents must understand that while representing Mount Carmel Area athletics — student athletes will be held to a higher standard. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege not a right.
9. Students also must be aware that in this era of cell phones and social media - pictures and videos can be taken without student knowledge. Any visual evidence of failure to adhere to the MCA Code of Conduct will result in team disciplinary action. The conduct does not need to occur on school property to be in violation of this policy.

Training Rules and Regulations

1. If an athlete is involved in an out of school suspension, the athlete will lose his/her right to participate (including practice) while under the suspension. The athlete is not permitted on school property during the suspension.

2. If any athlete is involved in an in-school suspension, the athlete may not participate in any practice or competition on the day of the in-school suspension. The athlete may attend the activity at the discretion of the head coach.

3. Student-athletes must report to school at the designated starting time as listed in the Student Handbook on the district's website in order to participate in practice or compete in a game. If warranted, the principal or athletic director may grant exceptions. Students who come into school late or leave at the end of the day, or are coming and going for an approved appointment during the day, will be required to submit a verification note of their arrival and departure from the appointment.

4. Vandalism is a criminal action. Any student-athlete caught with stolen school property will be dealt with accordingly which may involve criminal prosecution.

5. Drinking/possession of alcoholic beverages, use/possession of tobacco products, and/or the use/ possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances are strictly forbidden while attending any school district function. Any student-athlete guilty of violating the above during the school term will be suspended from school as per district policy. While on suspension the student may not participate in extracurricular activities. The coach may take other action according to their own listed rules and the district's athletic policy.

6. All members of a team will travel to and from away games on the team bus unless a parent or guardian provides a written request to the athletic director or principal prior to the event. After the athletic director/principal approval is obtained, a copy must be presented to the coach in order to be released. Another student-athlete will not be permitted to be transported by another parent unless granted permission from both sets of guardians.

7. Equipment issued to the athlete is the sole responsibility of that athlete. Loss of any part of that equipment issued will result in the athlete paying the replacement cost. Game uniforms are only to be worn for the contest or during the school day of the contest. Any student-athlete who has an obligation for issued athletic equipment may not participate during the next sport season or any future season until all athletic obligations have been cleared.

8. Uniforms for all athletes must be red and white only with the following logos displayed on the uniform: Mount Carmel Area, MCA, Mt. Carmel Area. No other colors or verbiage is to be displayed on the uniform. All uniforms, whether they are purchased by the school or through donations or a combination of both, must be approved prior to their purchase by the school district.

9. Athletic equipment must be returned within one week after the last game of the season. All uniforms must be washed. All equipment should be returned only to the person who issued it, for example; head coach or equipment manager.

Athletic Trainer Guidelines and Protocols

Certified Athletic trainers (ATC's) are highly qualified, multi-skilled, licensed health care professionals who render service or treatment, under the direction of or in collaboration with a physician, in accordance with their education, training and the state's statutes, rules and regulations. As a part of the health care team, services provided by athletic trainers include primary care, injury and illness prevention, wellness promotion and education, emergent care, examination and clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions.

1. The Athletic Trainer is available after school in the Athletic Training Room located in the gymnasium for 45 minutes after the last bell. Any other time has to be scheduled with the athletic trainer.
2. The Athletic Trainer attends home athletic events for the Junior and Senior High School.
3. Athletes should report all injuries/illnesses, minor and serious, to the Athletic Trainer
4. The Athletic Trainer is an advocate for the athlete regarding treatment and referral to other medical practitioners.
5. If the athlete is unable to be seen after school the athlete can be seen at Star Physical Therapy & Fitness (Star) Monday through Thursday 8am-7pm. All other times must be scheduled with the athletic trainer.
6. All minor injuries are treated without referral covered under the school contract, without need of medical insurance.
7. Major injuries are defined as any injury requiring skilled Physical Therapy designated by a prescription from a medical practitioner
8. Any athlete deciding to be treated at Star Physical Therapy & Fitness will be given priority in scheduling.
9. All Major injuries treated in Physical Therapy at Star will be subject to payment through insurance 2 times weekly for the duration of treatment.

Concussion

1. Pre-season performance baselines. All athletes must have Neurocognitive testing CNS VITAL SIGNS
2. If the athlete should report any "strike or hit" to the head causing any of the following symptoms: Confusion, Headache, Vision disturbances (double or blurry vision), Dizziness or imbalance, Nausea or vomiting, Memory loss,

Ringing ears, Difficulty concentrating, Sensitivity to light, immediately to the athletic trainer.

3. The athletic trainer will assist in further testing and referral to medical practitioners as needed.
4. If an athlete or parent is concerned after an athlete has had a head injury or the above symptoms become worse they should seek medical attention immediately.
5. Athletes are not to return to play without clearance from a medical practitioner and/or the athletic trainer.

Prohibitions

The Mount Carmel Area Administration is authorized to prohibit a student from any or all athletic events and extracurricular activities for a violation of the athletic code of conduct, the student code of conduct, athletic training rules, or any other rules or regulations of the school district, school, coach or advisor that are applied to students, student-athletes or students participating in athletics or extracurricular activities.

Prior to any prohibition in athletics, the athlete will be given the opportunity to informally meet with the coach, the athletic director or other school district representative to challenge the reasons for the prohibition or to otherwise explain his/her actions. Any prohibition will be determined by the Superintendent or other school district administrative personnel. The provision of the informal meeting, or any other due process, is not applicable in the instance of normal discipline procedures in which a student-athlete is removed from the athletic activity for less than one day of athletic activity.

Changing Sports / Same Season

Once an athlete attends the first five (5) days of practice of a sport (i.e., football), he/she may not quit and try out for another sport (i.e., cross country) that is being conducted simultaneously, unless the two coaches (i.e., head football and head cross country) mutually agree to the change. If an athlete is cut from the squad (i.e., football), he/she may try out for a second sport (i.e., cross country) at the discretion of the coach of the second sport (i.e., cross country).

Dual Sports Seasons

A student may participate in two sports at the high school level (i.e., cross country and golf) during the same season if both coaches (i.e., cross country and golf) agree, and the administration approves, based on whether or not dual participation will result in conflict in the requirements of the two sports.

Financial Obligations and Equipment

A. Equipment – All athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment issued to them. School furnished equipment/uniforms are to be worn for contests and practice **only**. Equipment used by all athletes must be either purchased by the school, or approved by the athletic department for use. All equipment/uniforms not returned in good condition at the end of the season will be subject to a financial penalty.

B. Only uniforms and warm up. issued and/or approved by the athletic department will be permitted to be worn for contests.

Vacation Policy

Vacations are encouraged during the summer break and not during an athlete's season, which could cause a disruption in the continuity of their development in that particular sport. However, if a vacation is unavoidable, please contact the athlete's respective head coach as soon as possible or if possible, prior to the start of the sports season.

Travel

A. Transportation will be provided by the Mount Carmel Area School District for all extra-curricular activities

B. Athletes will remain with their team and under the supervision of the coach when attending away contests.

C. Athletes are encouraged to attend all events with their team, however, if an athlete must be transported by a parent/guardian, he or she must provide a written communication prior to the event.

Insurance Policy/Procedures

A. The school district only insures school students participating in school interscholastic athletics, when they are practicing, competing or traveling as a team. All students must be supervised by a school district employee.

B. Students who are injured must fill out a medical claim form and return it to the Athletic Director within one week of the injury. Failure to file forms in a timely manner may result in denial of the claim. Link: https://www.mca.k12.pa.us/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/student_insurance_23-24.pdf

C. Out-of-season injuries are not covered. Insurance for regular school time and activities, including gym class injuries and/or 24 hour coverage must be purchased by the student if he wishes such coverage.

D. The District will be responsible for covered expenses only, and those expenses must be directly related to injuries received for activities as listed above.

E. All bills should first be submitted to the student's primary insurance. All additional coverage is provided on an Excess Basis over the coverage provided in the group insurance of the parents. Bills not paid by the parent's insurance should be submitted for consideration by the school's insurance carrier.

F. Coverage not provided by either the parents insurance or the school's insurance, becomes the responsibility of the parents. The district's excess coverage only covers usual, customary and reasonable charges.

G. If the parents do not have a valid and collectible group insurance, the district will submit the bill to our insurance company, providing:

H. The parents sign a statement from our insurance company indicating they have no valid and collectible insurance. The signed statement is returned by the parents to the Athletic Director, so the school district may submit the required paperwork. Failure to follow this procedure will release the Mount Carmel Area School District of any liability for payment of bills.

I. All athletes are encouraged to purchase school insurance, which is offered at a minimum cost in September.

J. The district is not responsible for purchasing special equipment such as special shoulder pads, knee braces, etc.

K. Athletes must first report the injury to their coach, who will refer the athlete to the team doctor or to the school nurse and athletic trainer. If the referral is to the team doctor, the team doctor will refer the athlete to a hospital or to a specialist, as required. If the referral is to the nurse, the nurse will refer the athlete to the team doctor, if necessary. In either case, the athlete must report to the school nurse and Athletic Director to obtain the required insurance forms.

L. EMERGENCY cases should receive the immediate attention of the coach who shall make certain that the injured athlete is taken either to a doctor or to a hospital, as necessary, and notify the Athletic Director.

Residence

A. All students participating in athletics at Mount Carmel Area, must meet the residency requirements of the Mount Carmel Area School District, or if in a co-op sport with a participating school district must be enrolled in that school district.

B. Parents and Guardians will be required to provide updated residency status if requested by the Mount Carmel Area School District.

Transfers

Although any school age student may transfer into the school district, those desiring to participate in athletics must meet the requirements of the PIAA transfer rules. Any student transferring to MCA cannot have been coerced by any coach or school official to attend MCA primarily for athletic intention.

Athletic Awards/Letter Requirements

A. The Coaches will determine yearly, what their letter requirements are and review that with their student-athletes. At the end of the sports season, the Head Coach will supply a list of Letter Award recipients to the Athletic office for preparation of a Letter Certificate, endorsed by the High School Principal, Athletic Director, and Head Coach.

B. Certificate of Participation will be issued to those Athletes who have not met the Letter requirement, but who completed the season. They will also be signed by the Principal, Athletic Director, and Head Coach.

C. The coach in all the above sports has the final determination and discretion whether or not an athlete has qualified for a letter.

D. As part of graduation, each senior athlete will receive one Varsity letter and sports pin their first year and a bar for second, third, etc., letter won. As long as they completed their season, all seniors will receive a letter regardless of years of participation, even if they don't meet the lettering criteria.

E. The Head Coach will decide on managers and statisticians awards.

I HAVE READ AND REVIEWED THE ABOVE LISTED ATHLETIC HANDBOOK FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES WITHIN THE MOUNT CARMEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT. I UNDERSTAND ITS COMPONENTS AND AGREE TO ADHERE TO THEM.

STUDENT'S PRINTED NAME	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**
PARENT'S PRINTED NAME	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**

ATTEST

CASSANDRA NIGLIO		
DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**