ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Athletic Department
Phone: 978-371-6558
Fax: 978-371-6597
Mascot: Zebra

Joe Lang
Director of Athletics
978-371-6560
jlang@mxschool.edu

Pat Stefanowicz
Assistant to the Athletic Director
978-371-6555
pstefanowicz@mxschool.edu

Emma Rasmussen
Assistant Athletic Director
978-371-6559
erasmussen@mxschool.edu

Joe Mallen
Assistant Athletic Director
978-371-6503
jmallen@mxschool.edu

Bill Holden
Assistant Athletic Director
978-371-6556
bholder@mxschool.edu

Laura Darby McNally, ATC, CSCS
Certified Athletic Trainer
978-371-6557
ldarby@mxschool.edu

Miles Levine, MS, CSCS
Strength and Conditioning Coach
mlevine@mxschool.edu

School Website: www.mxschool.edu
Athletic Website: www.athletics.mxschool.edu
ISL Website: www.isleague.org
Introduction:
At Middlesex, athletics are co-curricular. Whether you live for practices and game days or have never stepped foot on a field, you will find a place in the Middlesex Athletic Department. We firmly believe that being on a team can teach cooperation, sacrifice, determination, resilience, leadership, and test your physical abilities in ways that nothing else can. For this reason, participation in interscholastic team sports is an exciting and important component of the Middlesex experience. With over 50 interscholastic teams spanning all skill levels, each student finds an athletic experience suited to his or her talents and goals. Some students develop their athletic ability on thirds and JV teams, while others immediately compete for positions at the varsity level. Our experienced coaches get the most out of their players and prepare them for the next level of competition. For some the next level is varsity, for others the next step a college program.

The purpose of the Athletic Handbook is to provide students and parents information on the Athletic Department. This handbook covers information applicable to all teams at Middlesex School. In addition, coaches will provide students with sport-specific guidelines and expectations at the beginning of each season.

The hope of the Athletic Department is that this handbook will serve as a resource and help to create a collaborative-team approach between the School and family, which will ensure a positive experience for our athletes.

Athletic Department Mission Statement:
Athletics are an integral part of the educational experience at Middlesex. From the day students arrive on campus their freshman year to four years later when they walk across the stage at graduation, we ask athletes to be fully engaged participants. We believe that athletics teach meaningful life lessons about sportsmanship, competitiveness, resiliency, camaraderie, and, above all, integrity. We expect students to bring the best of themselves to practice and games each and every day. Here at Middlesex, athletes’ minds and bodies are pushed to their highest potential regardless of their level of play.

As a department and school, we place a strong emphasis on multi-sport participation. Playing a variety of different sports not only tests the mental and physical capacity of our athletes, but also challenges them to go outside their comfort zones and develop additional skills. Furthermore, we believe the multi-sport model encourages exploration of new strengths and helps to avoid overuse injuries.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, athletics at Middlesex help adolescences grow an awareness and confidence in their abilities, which is vital for success both on the playing fields and in the classroom. By graduation day, it is our goal to arm graduates with the strength and resolve to overcome the obstacles they will undoubtedly face in their day-to-day lives. It is also our hope that through their athletic experiences at Middlesex, they develop a lifelong passion and appreciation for health and fitness.
**Absence and Attendance Policy:**
Attendance is required at all athletic commitments, including recreational fitness and team-managing responsibilities. Long-term injuries or illnesses will fall into a special category for conversation with the Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer, the Health Center, the advisor and the student. All such excuses will require supporting medical documentation and only the Athletic Trainer or the Director of the Health Center can excuse a student from an athletic commitment. If a student fails to meet his/her athletic requirement because of poor (unexcused) attendance, that student will be required to “make up” the season. In the case of manager responsibilities, that student will no longer be allowed to manage and will be required to play an additional season on a team.

When a student is too ill to attend class or suffers a serious injury, the absence must be excused by the Health Center (for boarding students) or by receiving a call from the student’s parent to the Dean’s Office. Absences due to family or other important events that require a student to miss school or athletics must be cleared through the Dean’s Office at least two weeks prior to the event. In the case of an emergency, the student’s advisor will work in conjunction with the Dean’s Office.

If a student has missed two or more academic obligations during the day, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the practice/game that day unless the Nurse Practitioner or Physician has given permission.

**Awards:**
An Athletic Awards Assembly will be held at the end of each season to recognize athletes for their participation. At this time, both Middlesex and the league recognize students with certificates and athletic bowls. This is an in-school only assembly, scheduled during the academic day for students and faculty. Dates for the assembly are scheduled at the beginning of the academic year.

**Captains:**
An essential component for any team’s success is good leadership. One method to teach this skill is by selecting team captains. A strong captain can help a team achieve success by being responsible, having strong communication skills, and earning the respect of one’s peers and coaches. A good captain is much more than being a talented athlete. He/she must be accountable, disciplined, motivating and above all, have a passion for the sport that they play. It is both an honor and a privilege to be a captain and we take the selection process very seriously.

**Code of Conduct:**
Coaches, players and spectators are under the jurisdiction of the code of conduct. School representatives on site are responsible for the conduct of the players, coaches, and spectators of their school. As a member of the Independent School League, Middlesex fully supports the League’s “Sportsmanship Creed” adopted in the spring of 1994.
Independent School League Sportsmanship Creed:
The ISL is proud of the behavior and sportsmanship displayed by its players, coaches and fans. We value spirited and fair play as well as positive support for our players and teams. In order to ensure that our expected level of decorum continues each season and each game, we ask that all members of the ISL community continually renew their efforts to abide by the ideals of our league.

Players and Coaches:
Players and coaches are expected to represent themselves and Middlesex with honor, proper conduct, and good sportsmanship at all times. While competitive rivalries are encouraged, disrespect for opponents will not be tolerated. It is our expectation that the competitive nature of the game does not extend beyond the playing fields. We ask that parents conduct themselves appropriately on the sidelines and set good examples for our athletes. In addition, coaches, players, and spectators are asked to respect the decision-making of the officials, regardless of their personal feelings.

Spectators:
The ISL will not tolerate spectators (either student or adult) whose behavior is disrespectful in anyway towards players, officials or coaches. Those who choose to act disruptively during competition will be asked to leave the premises immediately by the Athletic Director.

Examples of Unacceptable Behavior:
For examples of unacceptable behavior during competition under guidelines of the ISL Heads’ and Athletic Directors’ Committee please see below:

1. Use of profanity or displays of anger that draw attention away from the game.
2. Booing or heckling an official’s decisions, criticizing an official in any way, or displaying temper with an official’s call.
3. Trash talk or conduct that antagonizes opponents.
4. Verbal abuse or intimidation tactics.
5. Disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, gestures, signs, posters, or banners.
6. Any distracting activity, such as yelling, waving arms, or feet stomping during an opponent’s free throw attempts.
7. Use of artificial noisemakers of any kind. (Legitimate pep-bands, however, are encouraged.)

Conference Affiliation:
Each of our athletic seasons features fierce rivalries, most of them drawn from decades of competition in one of the country’s most distinguished athletic leagues, the Independent School League (ISL).

Our perennial rivalry with St. George’s School punctuates the final date of each athletic season, as all of our teams – from varsity to thirds – compete in an epic showdown against the rival Dragons. Middlesex and St. George’s reflect just one of the historic rivalries found in the ISL. Originally formed in 1948, the ISL is comprised of sixteen Boston-area preparatory schools and holds the distinction of being the oldest Independent School athletic association in the country.
The league is built on a foundation of competitiveness, sportsmanship, and athletic excellence, and it has produced professional athletes, Olympians, as well as many national and international leaders in other fields. In addition to recent league championships in cross country, track, field hockey, lacrosse, golf, and skiing, we have been honored with several sportsmanship awards from our peers. Middlesex is a proud member of the ISL and a supporter of its ideals.

The ISL members are as follows: Middlesex School, Belmont Hill School, Brooks School, Buckingham Browne & Nichols, Governor’s Academy, Groton School, Lawrence Academy, Milton Academy, Noble and Greenough School, Rivers School, Roxbury Latin School, St. George’s School, St. Mark’s School, St. Paul’s School, St. Sebastian’s School, and Thayer Academy.

**Commitment/ Middlesex Athletic Policy:**

Class I: Students in Class I are required to participate in at least one season of interscholastic team sports. During one or both of the additional seasons, students may elect an alternative program or may petition the Athletic Project Committee for a project. Some type of exercise program supervised by a faculty member is required in conjunction with a project.

Class II: Students in Class II are required to participate in at least two seasons of interscholastic team sports. They may elect to participate in a strength and conditioning program or petition the Project Committee for an athletic project during the one remaining season. An exercise program supervised by a faculty member is required in conjunction with a project.

*Note: It should be understood that alternative programs, whether recreational or special projects, do not count as interscholastic participation.*

Classes III and IV: Students in Classes III and IV are required to participate in three seasons of interscholastic team sports. Dance is considered a team sport.

Team managing in any one of the three seasons fulfills an interscholastic sport requirement for members of all classes. Priority is given to the needs of varsity sports.

In the event that a team has reached its roster limit, students will be asked to choose an alternative sport for that season.

**Athletic Teams:**

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<tr>
<th>Fall:</th>
<th>Winter:</th>
<th>Spring:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys’ Cross Country</td>
<td>Alpine Skiing (Coed)</td>
<td>Boys’ Crew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls’ Cross Country</td>
<td>Boys’ Basketball</td>
<td>Girls’ Crew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Girls’ Basketball</td>
<td>Golf (Coed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Dance (Coed)</td>
<td>Boys’ Lacrosse</td>
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<td>Boys’ Soccer</td>
<td>Boys’ Hockey</td>
<td>Girls’ Lacrosse</td>
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<td>Girls’ Soccer</td>
<td>Girls’ Hockey</td>
<td>Boys’ Tennis</td>
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<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Boys’ Squash</td>
<td>Girls’ Tennis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Girls’ Squash</td>
<td>Track and Field (Coed)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wrestling (Coed)</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
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Eligibility and Team Placement:
All students must have an annual physical exam prior to their arrival on campus; they must then file pertinent medical forms with the Health Center before participating in athletics. All necessary medical forms are sent to students in the early summer and must be turned into the Health Center upon registration in the fall. The School’s Physician, Nurse Practitioner, or Athletic Trainer are the only individuals allowed to excuse a student from athletics.

Placing each student at the level where they can contribute physically and gain positive feelings from their efforts is central in the mission of the Athletic Department. We expect our students to learn the value of being on a team and the contributions necessary to have a positive experience. Athletes have responsibilities to themselves, their teammates and their coaches to learn their role on the team. Teamwork requires the development of many interpersonal skills such as listening, following directions, accepting constructive criticism, and supporting coaches and teammates. Athletes have an obligation to participate in practice sessions and games with full commitment and enthusiasm.

The ISL follows NEPSAC guidelines for age eligibility: individual athletes who are 19 years old, or younger, on September 1st of each school year are eligible to participate in ISL competition. A player may not receive credit for participating in a sport for more than one season in an academic year.

Students cannot be granted a project or be exempt from an athletic season to participate in an outside sport that is offered at Middlesex. In the case of a transfer student, once he/she has participated in an upper school sport in any given year, he/she may not participate for another ISL school in that sport in the same academic year.

Playing time:
When a student contributes to a team physically and emotionally, this participation becomes a positive experience. The aim of the Thirds and JV teams is skill development and preparation for the next level. At the varsity level, each coach is encouraged to be cognizant of an individual athlete’s opportunity to participate in games but is NOT required to play everyone. If a student athlete does not follow team expectations, his/her playing time may be limited or revoked. Please note that potential playing time may be adjusted if the coach believes that there is a safety concern for the individual athletes. Coaches are under no obligation to discuss playing time or team strategy with parents. In keeping with our philosophy that athletics are an important educational experience for our students, players are encouraged to communicate with coaches about individual questions or concerns in an appropriate manner.

Communication:
As part of the educational experience, students are encouraged to discuss individual problems with their coach. The Athletic Department requests that any questions about coaching philosophy and/or expectations be expressed during a private conference and never directly or publicly before or after a contest or practice. It is not appropriate for parents to discuss team strategy or other members of the team. Please see the letter we send to parents each year.
Equipment/ Uniforms:
The School supplies some standardized equipment; however, personal items such as shoes, protective padding (elbow, shoulder, shin etc.) are the responsibility of the athlete. At the beginning of every student’s Middlesex career, he/she will be issued practice clothes including: shirt, shorts, sweatpants, sweatshirt and a pair of socks. It is our expectation that each student wear Middlesex issue to every practice for all sports. Before and after sports, students are asked to dress and shower in the Gym. Dormitory facilities are not to be used for this purpose. A laundry service for athletic clothing is available in the athletic center at no charge.

Uniforms will be given to all teams. The coaches will assist with the distribution process at the beginning of the season. Students are responsible for any school issued uniforms during the season and should be prepared to return them following the last scheduled contest. Students will be financially responsible for any lost or damaged uniforms or issued equipment. When team members step into the playing area for a contest, all must be dressed alike- shirts tucked in and the same attire. Students are representing our team and school.

Purchasing additional athletic apparel by any team must go through the Athletic Director for approval.

Transportation:
The school will transport players to off campus games and practices. Game schedule, directions, and bus departure times are posted on Athletic page of the school website: http://athletics.mxschool.edu.

Students are not permitted to transport themselves or teammates to or from off campus sites. Exceptions can be made to this general rule with the proper permissions (coaches and Deans’ Office).

Game or Practice Cancellation:
Scheduled games may be canceled due to inclement weather, poor field conditions or other reasons. It is our goal to make game cancellation decisions by 11:00am and practice cancellation decisions by 1:00pm. In the event of a canceled game or practice, varsity games will be rescheduled and given priority for practice times/space. As changes develop, the website will be updated immediately as cancellations and/or changes occur. For other specific questions please contact the Athletic Department at 978-371-6558. As students are notified of changes, they will be encouraged to communicate with parents.

Hazing:
Students, faculty, staff members, and others connected with Middlesex School should expect to be treated with consideration and respect. As a community enriched by its diversity, we recognize and respect differences in culture, race, ethnic origin, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

To preserve and protect the health of the community and those differences among individuals, the School will not tolerate harassment of any kind and is prepared to respond
with appropriate discipline, including dismissal. In addition, as required by state law, the
School will refer cases of reported child abuse to appropriate authorities.

Hazing is considered a violation of a Major School rule and will be treated as such.
Middlesex follows Massachusetts State Law regarding hazing. Please feel free to refer to the
Middlesex School Handbook for questions regarding hazing or any major school rule.

**Sports Injuries:**
Middlesex employs Licensed and Certified Athletic Trainers who supervise all aspects of the
Sports Medicine Program. All injuries of any nature must be reported to the coach at the time
that they occur so further injury can be avoided; the athlete or coach will inform the Athletic
Trainers of the injury either at the time of injury or post practice.

The Athletic Training Room is located on the ground floor of Orr Gymnasium. Athletic
Training Room hours may change according to school and practice schedules. Any changes
will be posted at the door to the Athletic Training Room. Athletic Trainers are accessible via
radio and cell phone communication during practice times and home games. During the fall
season an Athletic Trainer will travel with football per league rules.

The Athletic Trainers evaluate sports-related injuries and supervise rehabilitation on campus.
They work with coaches and athletes in understanding and preventing injuries. The Athletic
Trainers will consult with the Nurse Practitioner, School Physician or specialist as necessary.
Visits to outside specialists will be scheduled in consultation with the Health Center.

**Head Injury:**
All Middlesex athletes will complete an ImPACT© baseline neurological test every two
years. This test is one of the evaluation tools used post concussion to assist the Athletic
Trainers and Nurse Practitioner in making return to activity decisions; the athletes will repeat
the tests after a concussion to compare their cognitive abilities to those on their baseline.
Please see “Appendix A” regarding Middlesex School’s concussion policy.

**Return to play:**
Return to play decisions, regardless of the injury, are made in consultation with the Athletic
Trainers, treating Physicians and the Nurse Practitioner. The evaluation and opinion by an
appropriate medical doctor or clinical specialist will be included in the decision for return to
school activities, sports or other school functions. This evaluation must be a written
statement, dated and signed by the medical doctor or clinical specialist. This statement must
be transmitted to Health Center immediately upon return to School.

Any student who has doctor’s orders regarding an injury or medical status must abide by
those orders. The follow-up care for an injury must then be seen by the same attending
physician and at the appropriate time, a note stating a full return to activity status must be
submitted to school medical personnel in order to resume activity. In the event of a return
from injury, an athlete must be able to participate in a full practice, including sprinting,
cutting and shooting, prior to the game. If these requirements are not meet before game day,
the Athletic Training Staff reserves the right to make the final decision as to the athlete’s
participation in sports.
Medical Excuses:
If a student has missed two or more obligations on a given day in health services, or at home, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the practice/game that day unless the Nurse Practitioner has given permission.

If a team member suffers and injury or illness and is consequently unable to participate for their team, the following policy must be adhered to:

1. The Coach and Athletic Training Staff must be notified when the student athlete is unable to participate.
2. Athletes must attend team practices everyday that they attend school, unless they are in supervised rehabilitation with the Athletic Training Staff or an outside Physical Therapist. If going off-campus for rehabilitation, the Athletic Training Staff must be notified in advance, the dates and must have written clearance from that therapist for return to activity at school.
3. No athlete will be allowed to return to participation from an injury without the written clearance from a physician (who is not a relative) once they have been restricted from participation or diagnosed by that physician.
4. The Athletic Training Staff reserves the right to restrict an athlete from athletic participation, regardless of physician or parental clearance, if they determine that the athlete’s safety is still at risk.

Parents:
In order to ensure that the athletic experience of your daughter or son is positive, we feel that it is important that you read and abide by the following guidelines:

1. Practice appropriate sportsmanship.
2. Respect the officials and their authority during games.
3. Do not question or confront the coach at the athletic venue. Please speak to advisor or make an appointment through the athletic department to air grievances.
4. Remember that the game is for the athletes to have fun. This program is for the youth not the adults.
5. Reinforce with your child that competing as hard as one can is more important than winning or losing.
6. Demand that your child treat opposing players, officials, coaches, spectators with respect and dignity.
7. Promote the physical and emotional well-being of student athletes.
8. Do not encourage any behaviors that could endanger the health and well-being of the student athletes.

Life on the sidelines as a parent: We need your help in making sure that our children have good athletic experiences in the only way that parents can support that goal – through our own behavior as spectators, supporters, and encouragers. As parents, we sometimes tend to focus on the moment – the missed pass, the minutes played, the shot that went wide, the ref’s missed call. Given our emotional investment in our children, as well as the Jumbotron culture of
craziness at professional sporting events, we sometimes overstep the boundaries of our children’s experience and want/need/take part in it for ourselves. Stepping back, we can all see that for our children to get what we truly want for them in the big picture – resiliency, problem-solving, camaraderie, leadership, grace under pressure, poise, confidence, courage – we need to allow them to do the work of learning and growing. In students’ lives, practice and competition are great sources of experiential learning. But to learn from the experience, a child has to have the experience and own the experience. As parents, all we can do is to support that goal.

**Website:**
Middlesex Athletics is included in the school website under the “Athletics” tab. All the team schedules are posted along with directions to departure times for teams with away games. Team scores and varsity game write-ups can be found on the page in addition to recent sports news and a staff directory. Please consult the site as often as you wish. Updates will appear routinely throughout the year.
Appendix A

Concussion Policy:
Middlesex School seeks to provide a safe return to activity for all students after injury. Due to their nature, concussions require a particular approach. A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head resulting in an alteration in mental awareness. Such injuries can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Due to the potentially serious consequences of a concussion, Middlesex School has adopted conservative and proactive guidelines for the management of students with concussions. These guidelines aid in ensuring that students are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up care, including academic oversight, and are fully recovered prior to returning to activity.

- All Middlesex students are offered a baseline ImPACT prior to participation in the athletics program. ImPACT is a research-based software tool utilized to evaluate recovery after concussion. ImPACT evaluates multiple aspects of neuro-cognitive function, including memory, attention, cognitive processing speed, reaction time, and post-concussion symptoms. Baselines are updated every 2 years.
- All students, who are known to suffer a head injury while at school, will be evaluated on the field or in the Health Center as close to the time of injury as possible. If it is determined the student sustained a concussion the student will be evaluated using the Zurich Concussion Statement and materials developed by the American Academy of Neurology, and recommendations will be made using their evidence based criteria.
- If the student is unconscious or there is suspected neck or back involvement, EMS will be called and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital.
- After all concussions, regardless of where they happened, it is expected that the student and his/her family will communicate with the nurse practitioner and the athletic trainer on a regular basis, in order to provide the most effective care for the student.
- The Health Center staff will notify parents of all concussion injuries that occur at Middlesex School. Written and/or verbal follow-up care instructions will be given to Day Parents. Boarders will be followed a stay in the Health Center for 24 hours post injury. All students with concussion will have a medical evaluation by the nurse practitioner or school physician. The Health Center staff and/or athletic trainer will notify each other of the injury, within 24 hours to initiate the appropriate follow-up care.
- All students with a concussion will be removed from any physical activity and/or sports and will be unable to return until cleared by the nurse practitioner and the athletic trainer. Students and their families are also expected to follow the activity restrictions set forth by the nurse practitioner and athletic trainer.
- Advisors will be informed when their advisees have suffered a concussion. Coaches will be informed of athletic restrictions via the Sports Excuse list posted on the athletic trainer’s door. Coaches are required to check the list prior to practice. Academic accommodations will be communicated with all faculty and updated with changes regularly.
- All students who suffer a concussion will be referred to the athletic trainer or the Health Center staff for initial post-injury cognitive testing (ImPACT) within 72 hours. Students will continue to be tracked with serial cognitive testing until they return to their baseline.
- The nurse practitioner and athletic trainer will continue to provide coordinated care for the duration of the injury. Any student who exhibits deterioration of neurological function or symptoms persisting beyond seven to ten days may require an evaluation by a concussion specialist.
• The nurse practitioner and health center staff will monitor the student closely and work collaboratively with his/her medical provider(s) until the student returns to his/her pre-injury neuro-cognitive and physical status. There will be ongoing communication with the student’s family, advisor and the Academic Dean regarding the student’s neuro-cognitive recovery and need(s) for academic support.

• Recommendations for short-term academic accommodations will be made in collaboration with the Dean of Academics and in consultation with the advisor for students with diagnosed concussions. Students requiring longer-term academic accommodations must be under the care of a concussion specialist.

• Any accommodations granted must be consistent with all aspects of the program of the school. Students who are unable to attend to their commitments on a full-time basis may need to take a medical leave of absence from the school to recuperate from the effects of the concussion.

• If a student requires the involvement of a concussion specialist, clearance for sports will be required from the specialist. However, the final decision for sports clearance will be given by Middlesex School.