

## Sporting Event Credentialing Procedure for Sideline Access

The purpose of this Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) sporting event credentialing procedure is to;

- *establish clear and consistent guidelines for sideline access at HCPS athletic events.*
- *ensure that only approved individuals can access the sidelines—media, photographers, and videographers.*
- *outline expectations for behavior, safety compliance, and content usage to ensure the proper conduct of all credentialed individuals.*
- *maintain a safe and professional environment for all involved.*

By implementing a yearly credentialing process and specific requirements for media organizations, this plan promotes consistency across HCPS events while maintaining the safety, integrity, and professionalism of sideline access. *Any violations of these guidelines will result in revocation of credentials and possible future access restrictions.*

*Credentialing guidelines outlined in this document are not exhaustive. Credential holders are expected to comply with all other HCPS policies, school rules, and any additional directions provided by HCPS staff at events.*

### Requirements for Sideline Access

- Only vetted individuals are allowed sideline access.
- For traditional media sources, HCPS will only vet the media organization, not the individuals representing those organizations. The credentialing media organization is responsible for ensuring its representatives comply with HCPS policies, procedures, and these guidelines.
- Harford TV and traditional media sources do not count toward the sideline cap of individuals.
- Sideline access is limited to 2 individuals for away teams and 3 for home teams. Traditional media/news sources do not count toward these limits.
- Credentialed individuals must be at least 21 years of age. Exceptions apply to HCPS student media, and staff or interns representing a vetted, official media organization.
- Credentials must be displayed throughout the event.
- Individuals must remain on their respective team's sideline and may not switch to the opposing sideline, unless representing a traditional news organization or outlet vetted through the Harford County Public Schools Communications Office.
- Student media is not allowed on the sideline at away venues.

Approval/Credentialing Process		Sideline Access
<b>TRADITIONAL NEWS SOURCES</b> These include, but are not limited to; The Aegis, Sports Weekly, The Cecil Whig, The Baltimore	Contact the HCPS Communications Office prior to the beginning of the sports season for vetting. Traditional outlets will be vetted at the organizational level, not by individual staff member. The outlet is responsible for ensuring that	Must notify the Athletic Director at least 24 hours in advance if they plan to cover an event. Exceptions may be granted by the school athletic director, principal, Supervisor of Interscholastic Athletics, or

<p>Sun, and local television stations such as WJZ, WMAR, WBAL, WBFF.</p>	<p>any representative using its credential complies with all HCPS rules.</p>	<p>Communications Office in situations such as weather changes, schedule adjustments, or breaking news.</p> <p>Traditional News Sources are encouraged to plan ahead. If they anticipate the need to cover multiple events, or if they believe weather or other events could impact their event coverage, they are encouraged to provide notification to the additional school(s).</p> <p>Be prepared to show organization credentials and a photo ID to gain access to the game and sidelines.</p>
<p><b>STUDENT MEDIA</b> school sponsored publications.</p>	<p>Teacher sponsors of school publications must provide the names of the students covering the game to the Athletic Director.</p>	<p>Must notify the Athletic Director at least 24 hours in advance of game coverage.</p> <p>Exceptions may be granted under the same circumstances outlined above for traditional news sources.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL MEDIA</b> These include individuals who are interested in covering HCPS school sports. Local blogs, local photographers, etc. <i>Anyone who does not fall under the above categories is covered here.</i></p>	<p>The application must be submitted via paper form and delivered in person to the school.</p> <p>Credentials are valid for the school year and provide access to all HCPS sporting events on HCPS properties.</p> <p>Credentials must be returned to the school Athletic Director upon the conclusion of the sports season. Failure to do so will result in a \$50 charge for replacement of missing or lost credential.</p>	<p>Must notify the Athletic Director at least 24 hours in advance of game coverage.</p> <p>Exceptions may be granted under the same circumstances outlined above for traditional news sources.</p>
<p><b><i>Photographers and videographers hired by students, their families, or outside third parties for the student's personal use will not be granted sideline access and must remain in the stands. This restriction does not apply to individuals contracted by Harford County Public Schools employees or volunteers for official team purposes, such as film study or game analysis. Credentialed media may only sell images used in their affiliated publication, in alignment with MPSSAA postseason policy. Credentialed individuals will follow the MPSSAA postseason image policy during the entire season, not just during the postseason.</i></b></p>		

## **Expectations for Media at HCPS Athletic Events**

- Individuals must comply with all directions from HCPS staff.
- Individuals are subject to undergo security procedures in place for the event.
- Credentialed individuals are exempt from the clear bag policy; however, all bags are subject to search at entry. This exemption applies only to professional camera or equipment bags used for work purposes.
- No distracting behavior or cheering while covering an event in an official media capacity.
- Do not obstruct the view of fans.
- No flash photography is allowed.
- Drones are strictly prohibited on HCPS property as stated in Harford County Board of Education Policy.
- Be aware of and adhere to the schools posted emergency action plan.
- Show respect to fans, officials, coaches, student-athletes, staff, administrators, and fellow media members.
- Upon request, credentialed individuals must provide schools with a copy of requested images or video for educational or school purposes only. This requirement implies only a limited, non-exclusive license to the school and HCPS for internal use, unless the parties agree otherwise. HCPS will provide appropriate credit to the photographer, videographer, or organization when using such media. Creators maintain copyright and publication rights in accordance with applicable law.
- Credentialed individuals should refrain from capturing images or video of emergency situations, injuries, or fights unless directed by HCPS staff. If such content is captured, the individual must provide a copy to the school and/or authorities before leaving the premises. This requirement does not prevent the media from publishing or retaining their original content in their official publications. Credentialed individuals are not permitted to sell any such footage or images captured for use by a third party entity..

## **Sport Specific Guidelines**

- **Baseball/Softball:** No access to the field of play; must stay outside the fence.
- **Basketball/Volleyball:** No access to the court or team areas; must not obstruct fans' view.
- **Cross Country:** Must not obstruct timing equipment, officials, coaches, or athletes.
- **Football:** No access between the 20-yard lines; must stay outside restraining lines.
- **Golf:** No access to the line of play or interference with players/coaches. Must follow established expectations for the venue.
- **Indoor Track & Field:** Must not interfere with event areas, timing equipment, or athletes. Must follow established expectations for the venue.
- **Lacrosse/Soccer/Field Hockey:** No access to team bench areas; must stay outside restraining lines and avoid the endline areas.
- **Swimming:** Allowed on deck but must not interfere with timing equipment or be behind starting blocks.
- **Tennis:** Must remain outside the fence and avoid obstructing fans' view.
- **Track & Field:** Must not interfere with event areas, timing equipment, or athletes.
- **Wrestling:** No access to the mat; must not interfere with officials, coaches, or athletes.

***A centralized list of all approved individuals will be maintained by the Supervisor of Interscholastic Athletics and a member of the Communications Office. Athletic Directors will have access to the file and the ability to edit.***