



JMCSS Innovation  
Department

Jackson-Madison County School System

# JMCSS Innovation Handbook

JMCSS Families and Students,

We are honored you have chosen to be part of a competitive Innovation Team! We hope you find this opportunity to expand your academic learning, build friendships, and cultivate your employability skills.

Innovation Department

## JMCSS Innovation Teams

**Judgment** – We will use good judgment to offer our Innovation Students the most competitive experience while keeping their health, safety, and character development at the forefront of all that we do.

**Motivation** – We will do all in our power to motivate our Innovation Students to become the best possible versions of themselves. We will lead by example and utilize the benefits of positive motivational techniques.

**Courage** – We will have the courage to always do the right thing. We will lead with courage knowing that doing the right thing will always be supported, recognized, and celebrated.

**Service** – We will model servant leadership. We will serve our Innovation Students, peers, school community, and the Jackson Madison County community to the best of our ability each day. We will be advocates for JMCSS in all that we do.

**Support** – We will support our Innovation Students, each other, and our school community to help all parties grow daily toward becoming the best versions of themselves. Let Judgment, Motivation, Courage, Service, and Grace guide you in your Support.

For questions or comments, please contact Dr. Teresa McSweeney, the Chief Innovation Officer for the district.

## **JMCSS Innovation Mission Statement**

The mission of the JMCSS Innovation Department is to identify innovative practices in academia and industry to bring opportunities to the Jackson-Madison County School System. The department is tasked to reimagine school, including rethinking the time, space, modes of learning, and partnerships related to student learning. These concepts are central to the department's WHEN, WHERE, HOW, and WHO. Helping students dream BIG is our WHY!

## **Sportsmanship Beliefs of the JMCSS Innovation Department**

JMCSS believes good sportsmanship is an integral part of interscholastic competition. For good sportsmanship to prevail, coaches, students, innovation competitors, and fans must display respect, fairness, honesty, and responsibility before, during, and after all competitive events. We encourage the enthusiastic support of all competitors and teams while exhibiting good sportsmanship in words and actions.

## **Responsibilities of a JMCSS Innovation Student**

- As an Innovation Student, you are a student first, then a competitor.
- Participation is an honor and privilege. Work hard.
- Always conduct yourself in a way that positively represents our team and school.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship.
- Demonstrate loyalty to teammates and coaches.
- Be coachable. Respect and accept the decisions of the coaching staff. Accept constructive criticism.
- Balance responsibilities to team, schoolwork, and family.
- Be committed to academic excellence. Passing grades are required in all content areas.
- Encourage teammates to excel.
- Put the team before self.
- Arrive to practice and events on time.

## **Responsibilities of a JMCSS Innovation Coach**

- To exhibit a public demeanor that reflects positively on the school.
- To fully support the JMCSS mission statement.
- To know and abide by all JMCSS general school and Innovation policies.
- To support the overall Innovation program including coaches of other teams and the encouragement of student participation in multiple Innovation competitive teams, if so desired. No Innovation Student shall be encouraged by any JMCSS Innovation Coach to participate in one specific sport over another.
- To ensure the safety and welfare of the Innovation Student. Coaches will champion competitive play that is always fair and ethical with a fundamental emphasis on good sportsmanship.
- To be knowledgeable in their Innovation area, dedicated to preparation, and committed to motivating students to optimum performance.
- To responsibly use and care for school-owned equipment associated with his or her Innovation team.
- To know and abide by all the rules of your Innovation team's governing body.
  - Robotics – REC Foundation
  - Greenpower electric racecars – Greenpower USA
  - eSports – Electric Gaming Federation (EGF)
  - Hub City Innovation Cup – Union University and the Hub City Innovation Cup Advisory Board
- To use only principal-approved colors and logos when ordering uniforms and/or practice gear. All clothing must meet JMCSS standards for appropriateness.
- The Innovation Department holds JMCSS Innovation Coaches accountable through a clearly articulated set of expectations and a yearly detailed evaluative process. All JMCSS Innovation Coaches are committed to supporting the school and Innovation Department's mission.

## **Responsibilities of a JMCSS Innovation Student's Parent**

- Create a positive atmosphere of support for teams. Please refrain from “bleacher gossip” that would not serve as encouragement to other student competitors.
- Refrain from being derogatory or abusive toward all coaches, officials, and competitors.
- Ensure Innovation Students arrive to practice and events on time and are picked up on time.
- Encourage Innovation Students to balance time commitments to both team and schoolwork.
- Schedule family vacations outside of Innovation team commitments as much as possible.
- Guide Innovation Students in both winning and losing with grace and poise.
- If capable, assist in the financial support for team extras.

## **JMCSS Innovation Teams**

- VEX IQ Robotics – elementary and middle school
- VEX VRC Robotics – middle school and high school
- eSports – middle school and high school
- Greenpower F24 Electric Racecars – middle school and high school
- Hub City Innovation Cup – high school

## **JMCSS Academic Eligibility Requirements**

Per the Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1031(b), which directly impacts the operation of clubs and organizations within schools, a minor student, defined as a student under the age of eighteen (18), cannot join or take part in any club or organization without documented consent from their parent or legal guardian.

Therefore, all Innovation Students must have their parent or legal guardian provide dated, written consent to participate on a JMCSS Innovation competitive team, afterschool club, or other extracurricular activity. These forms will be kept on file with each head coach and a copy provided to the school office if requested by the building principal.

## **Making a JMCSS Innovation Team**

All Innovation Students wishing to make a team should be provided with the following before tryouts:

- Try-out practice schedule
- Criteria used to select the team
- Practice and competitive events commitment if they make the team
- Behavior commitments

In a situation where “cuts” are necessary, the following factors are considered:

- Attributes of the candidate such as academic performance, maturity, and emotional control
- Skills particular to the team
- Skills particular to the “position” needed
- Specific needs of the team
- Previous experience in the Innovation area
- The number of positions available on the team
- School behavior

## **Participation**

JMCSS Innovation Students are encouraged to in a wide variety of activities. Students may participate in as many school activities as they can manage. When a student joins an Innovation Team, he/she is responsible for upholding team commitments. Accountability is essential in maintaining a cohesive and functional Innovation Program.

## **Scheduling Policies**

The JMCSS Innovation Department desires to help students achieve balance in their commitments. We will do our best to protect academic time by limiting school absences and early departures due to competitive events. However, there will be some infrequent occasions when academic time may be missed due to the following: travel distance,

advancement to State or World Championships, and the needs of event organizers. JMCSS Innovation Students are responsible for making up missed assignments in a timely manner.

- All practice schedules must be approved by the School Principal.
- School absences or early check-outs due to competitive events must be pre-approved by the School Principal.
- Coaches should publish and adhere to beginning and ending practice times.
- Sunday practices may not start before 1:00 pm and will conclude by 5:00 pm.
- In the event of inclement weather or pending inclement weather, the Innovation Department, District Lead Coordinator, and School Principal will decide whether an Innovation competitive event will be cancelled or postponed. This decision will be made as soon as possible to quickly communicate with others. Though every decision will not always be perfect, it will lean on the side of safety for the students.

## **Difficult Situations**

Parenting, teaching, and coaching are difficult jobs. The JMCSS Innovation Department supports a partnership between parents and the coaching staff. Many potential problems can be avoided by keeping the lines of communication open between participating students, parents, and coaches. For this reason, we encourage you to communicate with us about issues or concerns.

Coaches will make the decisions regarding the degree of involvement or team role of each Innovation Student based on the coach's best assessment of what is best for the team. Though it can be hard as a parent not to compare your child's team involvement to that of another, please understand that our coaching staff is committed to your child's continued improvement to prepare him or her for increased involvement, as well as for unique opportunities to help the team.

An important goal of competitive Innovation Teams is to instill in our students a sense of ownership and responsibility for their own actions. Student competitors need to learn the necessary communication skills and conflict resolution techniques that will equip them for more demanding situations and provide a way in which to conduct themselves with honor. Innovation Students and Coaches should make every effort to address one another with respect.

Please review the order of conflict resolution for Innovation Teams:

**Step 1:** Innovation Student and Coach

**Step 2:** Parent, Innovation Student, and Coach

**Step 3:** Parent, Innovation Student, Coach, and Principal

**Step 4:** Parent, Innovation Student, Coach, Principal, and Innovation Department

Topics of the competition time, team strategy, other student competitors, or role on the Innovation Team are not helpful conversations between coach and parent. However, asking about ways to help your child improve, expressing concerns about your child's behavior, requesting additional academic support, informing coaches of distractions in your child's or family's life, or requesting ways to be more involved as a parent in an effort to help the team are all very appropriate, appreciated, and encouraged conversations. We encourage you to voice your concerns civilly directly to us rather than to others. We desire to have a supportive partnership between coaches and parents.

Please be advised of the following procedures should you need to meet with a coach:

- Call or email the coach to set up an appointment.
- Feel free to ask the School Principal to be present as a mediator.
- A parent should never approach a coach after a competitive event unless the intention is positive or complementary in nature. If you have concerns following an event, please wait until the next day to schedule a meeting. Human nature would remind us that neither parents nor coaches are at its best immediately following a tense, hard fought competition. Waiting a day to address concerns allows tempers to cool and thoughts become more rational and civil.

## **Equipment and Uniform Care**

It is a privilege for Innovation Students to have specialized equipment and tools needed for their competitive teams. As such, JMCSS Innovation Students are responsible for the maintenance, upkeep, and protection of all issued uniforms and equipment. Innovation Students are responsible for lost or damaged items used during practice or an event. This includes students reimbursing any damage or replacement costs to the Innovation Department. Blatant destruction of equipment or tools may result in their being kicked off their Innovation Team.

## **Communication**

Innovation Teams utilize several different methods of communication in their correspondence with parents, students, and the community. The head coach will submit information such as competition results, stats, and special stories to the JMCSS Communications Department for local media. The Innovation Department will post

announcements, competition results, and other information to social media and coordinate with the Communications Departments about local media access.

We are excited you are a part of a JMCSS Innovation team! Our primary goal is to strive for excellence on all Innovation Teams as we build up young people to be individuals of character, wisdom, respect, trust, and honor.

***While this handbook is intended to provide specific structure for the JMCSS Innovation Programs, all circumstances and situations cannot be foreseen. Therefore, the Principal and Innovation Department will decide upon needed actions as cases arise.***

