



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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Philosophy of Athletics

Grace Academy aims to teach fundamental physical development to our students to benefit them for the rest of their lives. We teach each student to take proper care of his/her body, the temple of the Holy Spirit; to exhort one another in times of trial; to complete tasks which are begun; and to cooperate with team members.

We at Grace Academy must never allow the athletics program to become The Program. Athletics is offered so that the student can learn to face tough circumstances with determination and to continue on even if victory seems impossible. We desire for our athletes to learn to persevere, lose with grace, and win with humility.

Finally, the athletics program at Grace Academy teaches self-sacrifice, self-discipline, and personal commitment to attain the goal of excellence. Its primary goal is to develop characteristics in students that will enable them to overcome challenges they will meet throughout their lives.

Grace Academy Athletic Policies

Administrator (Head of School)

The administrator has the authority to employ and terminate coaches with the advice of the athletic director.

Athletic Director

The athletic director oversees the final scheduling of athletic events in the school year. In appropriate situations, the athletic director will assist in executing policy within the manual and from the administrator. It should be the goal of the athletic director to oversee each sport and prevent or resolve any problems that may occur during any athletic season. The athletic director should also produce a workable athletic schedule which complies with Grace Academy Board policy and supports the normal daily operations of the school.

Coach

The coach is responsible for the development of his or her team. The coach will take any dictated policy from the administrator or athletic director and execute it without dispute. It should be the goal of the coach to successfully develop his or her team, spiritually and physically, within the framework of a sound philosophy of the sport and to unite all players on the team. The coach should build up a student athlete using constructive criticism and encouragement, while avoiding berating and needless criticism. Furthermore, it should be the goal to develop the team from top to bottom as best as possible, leaving a relative consistency of team success from year to year. However, the playing time of each athlete will be determined strictly by the coach. The coach will delegate authority to assistant coaches, who are approved only by the administrator and athletic director. In addition, the coach will be ultimately responsible for the conduct of the assistant coaches. A coach should also be open to the suggestion of an assistant coach, administrator and athletic director. The coach will be ready and willing to discuss any matter in private with anyone. However, a coach should be careful of being influenced by favoritism from parents or players, an action which may disturb or destroy team unity. A coach will not publicly criticize athletic policy; rather, the disagreement may be addressed in a private meeting.

Assistant Coach

The assistant coach is directly responsible to the head coach for any actions taken involving the team. The administrator and the athletic director will approve the appointing of assistant coaches by the head coach. The assistant may be called upon to act as head coach should the head coach not be able to lead the team (sickness, leave of absence, suspension, termination). Each assistant coach should aim to support the head coach in all phases of team leadership. Disagreements between the assistant coach and the head coach should not be made public, which could destroy team unity. Any major disagreement should be addressed in private.

Standards of Conduct for Coaches

The athletic program at Grace Academy is intended to help students increase in wisdom and stature so they will be able to overcome challenges throughout their lives. The following Standards of Conduct are given to coaches as an aid to them in assisting Grace Academy in being faithful to its athletic philosophy.

1. All coaches (paid or volunteer) will submit paperwork for a background check.
2. All coaches (paid or volunteer) are subject to the Social Policies and Supervision Policies of the Grace Academy Employee Handbook.
3. In matters relating to athletic philosophy and policy, always submit to the head coach and/or athletic director. If you are ever unable to do so in good conscience, you are to do so until you have appealed the issue to the administrator.
4. Never push athletics as “The Program” most critical at Grace Academy. Show interest in other school programs by attending some non-athletic activities or events.
5. Be an example of those traits we wish to build in our students:
 1. Lose with grace
 2. Win with humility
 3. Exhibit self-sacrifice
 4. Display self-discipline
 5. Follow personal commitment to excellence
 6. Persevere in tough circumstances
6. When interacting with opposing coaches and parents, return evil with good.
7. Allow the head coach to respond and handle disputes with game officials.
8. When problems arise with parents of students on the team, immediately involve the head coach and/or athletic director.
9. When coaching your son or daughter, beware of showing special treatment toward them or unfair high expectations of their performance. As a coach at Grace Academy, you represent the school at every athletic event that your team participates in. Failure to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the standards stated above will lead to your removal as a coach.
10. All out of season practices and open gyms must be approved and scheduled through the athletic director.

Anticipated Sports Program Offerings for 2021-2022

Fall sports

Boys/Girls Cross Country (Grades 3-8)

Girls Volleyball (Grades 5-8)

Winter sports

Boys Basketball (Grades 5-8)

Girls Basketball (Grades 5-8)

Spring sports

Boys/Girls Track (Grades 3-8)

Behavior at Athletic Events

Grace Academy students are all aware of the standards set forth by the school but are oftentimes unaware of what we expect from them as spectators. Therefore, we have listed a few things to keep in mind when you attend an athletic event:

1. Do not criticize. Fans sometimes feel that they are able to do it better, but this is not their job. Support the players and coaches; **build them up – don't tear them down!**
2. As difficult as it may be, comments to officials and opposing teams should be positive.
3. Do not make derogatory comments to athletes on the opposing team or officials.
4. Realize that the word Christian means "Christ-like." We as Christians are always testimonies, whether good or bad. Grace Academy desires to portray a good testimony.

Long after the score is forgotten, our behavior and reputation are remembered

Requirements

Parents of athletes must sign a liability waiver before each new school year. The administration will set a date when waivers are due for each year, and the athlete cannot compete without waiver on file. One waiver per school year takes care of all sports for that school year. Student athletes and their parents must also fill out an athletic registration form each year, which requires reading the Athletic Handbook and signing their agreement with the Statement of Faith and policies of the Athletic Department. Athletes are required to pay a \$50 athletic fee per child, per sport with a max amount of \$100 per child for the year. In addition, students and parents must sign a copy of their coaches' policies/expectations form for each sport they participate in with Grace Academy.

Concussion Policy

A concussion is a brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and/or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head.

Common symptoms:

- headache or feeling of pressure in the head
- dizziness/feeling “in a fog”
- balance deficit
- unequal pupil size
- sensitivity to light and sound
- blurred vision
- nausea/vomiting
- overall slowed down feeling
- slurred speech

Do not ignore the symptoms of a concussion. If you feel it, report it. Report symptoms to your coach immediately.

Concussion Training

Every Coach or other person serving in a coaching or advisory role over student-athletes during physical activities, games, competitions, or practices shall receive training yearly in the signs and symptoms of sports-related concussions, strategies to reduce the risk of concussions, how to seek proper medical treatment for concussions, and the process by which a concussed student-athlete may safely return to practice or competition.

Concussion Procedures

1. The head injury is reported to the coach and athletic director immediately.
2. The athlete will be evaluated and immediately referred to a physician.
3. The athlete must be evaluated by a physician, PA or nurse practitioner following recognition of concussion symptoms.
4. A doctor’s note must be given to the athletic director, who will then give a copy to the coach.
5. Once diagnosed as a concussion, the athlete will remain out of all activity until released by a physician to begin the graduated return to play.
6. The graduated return to play will begin only once released by a physician, PA or NP-C, and the student athlete is *completely symptom free*.
7. There will be a five-day graduated return to play process (one (1) stage per day) that must be completed prior to returning to activities, and the athlete must remain symptom free throughout.

Concussion Return to Play Guidelines

It is important for an athlete's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to play progression activity. An athlete should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step. If an athlete's symptoms come back or if he or she gets new symptoms, this is a sign that the athlete is pushing too hard. The athlete should stop these activities and the athlete's medical provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, the athlete can start at the previous step.

Baseline: Back to School First

Athlete is back to their regular school activities, is no longer experiencing symptoms from the injury when doing normal activities, and has the green-light from their health care provider to begin the return to play process.

Step 1: Light aerobic activity

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means a stationary bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point. 10 minutes total activity

Step 2: Moderate activity

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine) 25 minutes total activity.

Step 3: Heavy, non-contact activity

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement) 30-45 minutes total activity.

Step 4: Practice & full contact

Young athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice. 60 minutes total activity

Step 5: Competition

Young athlete may return to competition.

(Taken from the CDC Heads Up Website)

Game and Practice Attendance

1. Once you have joined a team, **you have committed yourself to that team** until the last game and/or practice is completed.
2. Students of Grace Academy are expected to participate in sports with Grace Academy. A student is not allowed to play for other schools.
3. Participation on the school team will take priority over playing for club/park and recreation teams. Personal choice by the athlete or family to give club/park and recreation team higher priority may reduce the athlete's game time with the school team.
4. Athletes must be at every practice or game unless excused for one of the following reasons:
 - Personal sickness.
 - Death in the family.
 - Previously scheduled commitment approved by the head coach.
5. In order to participate in a game/competition, athletes must have been at their team's practice the day before.
6. Any athlete who misses a practice or game may have to make up practice activities and face the team's policy for reduction in playing time. This is not meant as punishment for an excusable absence, but as a reward and incentive to those team members who were present. A team member who must miss a practice or game may return to their former status as soon as they have fulfilled the team's policy for absences.
7. Each coach will announce his/her discipline procedure for missed practices or games at a parent meeting. The coaches will have their policies/expectations in writing and parents and athletes will be required to sign a copy of it for each sport they participate in with Grace Academy. **Three unexcused absences** after the official start day for each sport will result in dismissal from the team.
8. Official start dates for each season are as follows:
 - Fall Sports: August 1
 - Winter Sports: November 1
 - Spring Sports: March 1Coaches may have open gyms and try-outs before the official start dates, but absences will not count until after this date.
9. All athletes must be on time to practices and games. Coaches will announce their discipline procedures for tardiness.

Athlete's Code of Conduct

1. Every athlete is expected to maintain a good Christian testimony. Any time an athlete is not maintaining a Christian testimony on or off the field or in the classroom, he/she may be suspended or dismissed from the team.
2. Athletes are expected to be examples of good conduct to other students. In that regard, when an athlete receives a suspension from school, the student will be suspended from his/her team during that period. Further action will be at the discretion of the administrator.
3. A suspended athlete may participate in tryouts for a team but may not actively participate in practice or games until he has served a probationary period.
4. The use of profanity will not be tolerated. The use of profanity on or off the field may result in suspension from the team or loss of game time.
5. Athletes are to be good representatives of Christ and Grace Academy on road trips. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team.
6. Grace Academy does not condone and will not tolerate "hazing" or "initiations" of athletes by other athletes. Any such actions will result in suspension and/or dismissal from the athletic team.
7. Any athlete or coach that is ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game. If the athlete or coach receives a second ejection, he will be suspended for two games. A third ejection will result in dismissal from the team and forfeiture of athletic privileges for the remainder of the school year.

Rules of Eligibility for Participation in Practice and Games

1. All those involved in the athletic program must be in school at least 3 hours and 30 minutes (half of the school day) to participate in a practice or game scheduled for that day. The only exception is a previously scheduled doctor or dentist appointment or a previously scheduled commitment approved by the administrator. If you are sick and do not attend school you cannot attend a practice or game scheduled on that day.
2. No athletes will be added to a team's roster after 50% of its regular season games have been completed.
3. An athlete must have no D's at the end of the nine-week grading period to be eligible to compete. (Low mid-term grades will not hinder eligibility.) If a student earns a grade of D at the end of a nine-week grading period, they will be put on athletic probation. During the probation period athletes are not allowed to compete in games/matches/meets until their grade is no longer a D. They are still allowed to practice with their team. Students on academic probation will have weekly grade checks on Monday mornings to determine the end of their probation period.
4. The administration is responsible for the determination of eligibility of students and communicating to coaches. The length and impact of the probation period will be at the discretion of the administration and assessed weekly.

5. An athlete must abide by the following guidelines if placed on a probationary period:
- Before being reinstated to a team, an athlete on academic probation must obtain a grade verification form from the administrator/academic dean. The athlete is to give this form to his/her teachers and have the teachers fill in the grade and sign the form. The athlete is to acquire grades at the teacher's convenience. After all grades have been received, the athlete is to give the form to the administrator/academic dean for evaluation. If the proper improvements have been made, the athlete may return to the team at that time.
 - An athlete on probation can practice but will not be allowed to compete in games/matches/meets with the team while on probation. If an athlete attends games/matches/meets while on probation, they are to sit on the team bench in school attire.
 - These guidelines also apply to managers, statisticians, and scorekeepers.
 - Any violation of the probation guidelines may result in dismissal or suspension from the team.

Participation of Homeschoolers

For the 2021-2022 school year, we will allow homeschool families to participate as a part of our teams. Homeschool participants can join a Grace Academy Athletic team if the number of homeschool students represented on the team is less than 20%. If additional homeschool participants are needed to field/build a team for an emerging sport, administration has discretion to allow additional homeschoolers to participate even if the homeschool representation will be more than 20%.

For the 2021-2022 school year the homeschool fee will be \$150 per individual, per season (fall, winter & spring) for grades 6-8. We will not offer a sibling discount.

Homeschool athletes will not be allowed to participate for a homeschool team and a Grace Academy Athletic team during the same season.

Students that attend other smaller, Christian schools may participate in athletics with Grace Academy as long as their school does not offer the sport in which they wish to participate. The same homeschool participant rules and regulations apply for these athletes as well.

Selection of Teams

1. Each coach has the responsibility to select his/her team.
2. Each coach will have try-outs to select team members.
3. Final approval will come from the athletic director and the administrator.
4. To provide proper training and appropriate playing time for each team member, there will be a limit to the number of athletes allowed on each team.

Quitting

1. Character is not built by quitting. Trying times are not times to quit trying.
2. A student may drop off the team any time before the third practice without penalty. After that period of time **no student may quit the team without penalty. Any athlete who quits a team will not be allowed to join the team the following year.** There should be a strong sense of belonging to the team even when personal injuries would restrict the individual's participation in practices and games. An injured player is expected to be at all practices and games as if he/she were healthy.
3. An athlete who quits will be removed from the team roster and forfeit any post-season rewards such as team pictures, letters, awards, etc.
4. Exceptions to this rule would be for family hardships, severe injury, or serious academic problems. The athletic director and the principal will decide any exceptions.

Transportation

1. Parents or legal guardians must provide transportation of their student athlete to all games or practices.
2. Coaches, administrators, or other Grace Academy staff and faculty are not permitted to transport athletes (other than their own children) to games or practices.
3. An athlete may ride to or home from an off-campus game with a friend's parent(s) if the athlete's parents have provided the school or coach with written or verbal communication from the parent(s) or legal guardian prior to the game.
4. All exceptions to the above can be amended by the athletic director/administration.

Uniforms and Equipment

1. For the 2021-2022 seasons, Grace Academy will require the participant to purchase their individual uniforms.
2. Any uniforms or equipment issued to an athlete are the athlete's responsibility to return in good shape.
3. Lost or damaged equipment will be charged to the athlete.
4. All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach or athletic department within one week after the last game of the season.

Athletic Dress Code

1. All athletes must meet the school dress code for modest dress at practice.
2. Shorts must be mid-thigh length. (If shorts do not meet this standard, compression shorts must be worn underneath them to reach mid-thigh length. Compression shorts must also be worn with very loose-fitting shorts so as not to reveal undergarments during athletic participation.)
3. Spandex/compression shorts may ONLY be worn under another pair of shorts, not on their own.
4. Sleeveless shirts must have at least 2-inch shoulder straps, cannot have wide holes at the arm pits that hang down, and cannot reveal undergarments. (No tank tops. No spaghetti straps.)
5. Athletic uniforms will be approved by the administration and coach and will be modest in style.
6. Students are expected to travel to games in either their school uniform or sport's uniform as the coach and athletic director decide.
7. These guidelines apply to all players, managers, statisticians, and scorekeepers associated with each team.

Miscellaneous

The athletic director and administration will decide any questions or issues not discussed in this handbook.

A Word to Our Parents

How to Best Support Your Athlete

The best way to support your athlete is to provide encouragement and to be positive, both at home and in the stands. If you or your child has a question, please have your child talk to his/her coach. If a situation is not resolved or is of a serious nature, then call the coach yourself. If no solution can be reached at that point, then call the athletic director to set up a meeting with all parties involved. Know that you are the most important people in your child's life and that he/she wants you to be proud of him/her. Be in the stands, rain or shine, and cheer.

Standards of Conduct for Parents

If you, as parents, are involved in any way with such teams, the Administration and Board of Directors ask that you consider the following Standards of Conduct as you "represent" the community.

1. Be an example of those traits we wish to build in our students:
 - Lose with grace
 - Win with humility
 - Exhibit self-sacrifice
 - Display self-discipline
 - Follow personal commitment to excellence
 - Persevere in tough circumstances
2. When interacting with opposing coaches and parents, return evil with good.
3. Do not make derogatory comments to players on the opposing team.
4. Show respect for the referees who are in positions of authority during the game.
5. No degrading comments, name calling, or confrontations after the game.
6. Referees may not always be right, but they are never wrong.

Statement of Faith for Grace Academy

We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God, the final authority for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in right living (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1: 20-21).

We believe in one God, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each being a distinct person and with a distinct function, but all of one essence and all possessing the same nature, perfections and attributes (John 4:24; Romans 8:14-15; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Genesis 1:31).

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, fully man and fully God, only begotten Son of the Father. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and lived a sinless life. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, buried and rose physically from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of the Father and will come again in power and glory (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:8-25; Colossians 1:15; John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-9).

We believe that mankind was created by a direct act of God in His image, not from a previously existing life, that all men sinned in Adam (the historical father of the entire human race) and thus incurred both physical and spiritual death; and that all men have inherited a sinful nature (Genesis 1:1-3; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 1 and 5; Romans 3:23).

We believe that salvation of the lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, is absolutely essential and that this salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord not as a result of good works (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:5). We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture.

We believe that the Holy Spirit carries out this work in our lives, empowering us to grow in the loving union with our Heavenly Father and to walk in obedience to do His will. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a personal being who convicts the world of sin and who regenerates, indwells, empowers, guides, and bestows spiritual gifts on believers and who seals them eternally for God (John 6:37; John 16; Romans 8; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (Revelation 20, 21; 1 Corinthians 15).

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 2).

We believe that it is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and to seek to make growing disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including prenatal babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Psalm 139).

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Academy as a Christian ministry providing a Biblical role model, it is imperative that all Grace Academy students, their families, staff, faculty and volunteers agree to and abide by this statement of faith (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Note: Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all of our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of humanity and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior. The Grace Academy Board of Directors holds final interpretive authority on biblical meaning and application with regard to faith, doctrine, policy, practice, and discipline.