

Grace Christian Academy

Athletic Handbook

2022-2023



GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ATHLETIC POLICY MANUAL

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:17

We value our sports programs as a tool to assist in developing well-rounded student-athletes in pursuit of wisdom and a deeper relationship with Christ. We believe that athletic participation can instill in young people all the attributes necessary for success in life and as a Christian leader. We strive to teach courage, commitment, faithfulness, family, integrity, loyalty, and sacrifice as the base for all of our athletic teams. Our prayer is that all of our athletes grow as young Christian men and women who are ready to make a difference for Christ to whom they owe their abilities. At Grace, we understand the desire to win in athletic competitions, and we are continuously in the process of developing student-athletes that understand that winning is temporary and Christ is forever.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

- School Board
- Administrator
- Athletic Director
- Coaches
- Student-Athlete/Parents

ATHLETIC PROGRAMS OFFERED

Programs offered for junior high and high school depend on student-athletes' interest and available coaches. The 5th and 6th-grade athletes will participate at the junior high level.

- Junior High (grades 7-8):
 1. Boys Baseball and Girls Softball Fall Season
 2. Volleyball (girls) Winter Season
 3. Basketball (girls and boys) Winter Season
- High School (grades 9-12):

1. Volleyball (girls) Fall Season
2. Soccer (co-ed) Fall Season
3. Basketball (girls and boys) Winter Season
4. Softball (girls) Spring Season
5. Baseball (boys) Spring Season

ELIGIBILITY

At Grace Christian, we have developed our sports academic eligibility policy with your student's spiritual, academic, and athletic future in mind.

What is weekly ineligibility?

- Ineligibility is when a student-athlete has two D's or one F after an eligibility check.
- The Guidance Office does all eligibility checks, and the Guidance Counselor will handle all eligibility questions. If the Guidance Counselor is unavailable, the principal will determine the eligibility status.
- Ineligibility runs from Monday to the following Monday's Final Ineligibility list.

What does weekly ineligibility look like?

- Every Thursday, a "Tentative Ineligibility" Report will be run, and you will receive a RenWeb communication. This is sent to give students and parents a chance to address any issues before the final ineligibility report is run on Monday morning at 8 am.
- Any work that is turned in late will be graded at the teacher's discretion. There will be no bartering, and the Guidance Counselor will make the final decision.
- If a student is deemed ineligible, they are not allowed to attend practice, play in the scheduled games or travel with the team to away games.
- To maintain our academic integrity, there will be no changes in eligibility status after the Monday Final Ineligibility Report unless the guidance counselor was notified directly by a teacher that the ineligibility was due to an issue on their part.

Quarterly and Semester Ineligibility

- At the beginning of every quarter, the first eligibility check will be on the 10th day of school due to the need for students to accrue enough grades to run a report.
- If a student ends a quarter or a semester with an F, they will have to wait 10 school days until the second quarter eligibility check is run.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

No student-athlete is allowed to participate in practice or games until the Physical is turned into the office and the student is registered in the Athletic Registration Portal.

To ensure our student-athletes are physically capable of participating in our athletic programs, each student-athlete must submit an annual physical examination. The 6th and 9th-grade school physicals will be sufficient for the athletic physical requirements.

- Sports Physicals are valid for 13 months from the date of the physician signature. This requirement is monitored by the athletic department and the school office. The required forms are available in the school office or on the GCA website.
- Coaches will receive a copy of the Emergency Medical Permission Form for each student-athlete and have it available at all practices and games.

ATHLETIC INSURANCE POLICY

GCA does not assume any financial liability for injuries received while students are participating on an athletic team. Athletes should have some form of insurance as a result.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance is an integral part of the student athlete's academic responsibility. Therefore, all student-athletes are expected to have a good school attendance record.

A student who is not in attendance for more than half of the day (4+ classes) the day of a contest will not be eligible to compete in that day's competition. Exceptions: College visits, school-sponsored activities, family emergency

(hospitalization/death), or other circumstances approved at the discretion of the Academy's Athletic Director and/or Administrator.

- Student-athletes are expected to be in class the entire day to participate in practice/games. Exceptions are made for doctor's appointments or family emergencies. Student-athletes are also expected to be in class the entire day following a game unless the student-athlete is ill, has a doctor's appointment, or has a family emergency.
- All class assignments are due as scheduled for the student-athletes on the day of the game and the day following the game. It is recommended that all assignments are submitted before leaving campus for classes missed due to early dismissal. Tests and quizzes scheduled during early release are administered at the discretion of the individual teacher.
- An excused or unexcused absence is determined by the front office and school administration.

PRACTICE/GAME ATTENDANCE

Practice is essential to an athletic team. This is the time when the team develops unity, teamwork, skills, game strategies, and self-discipline. It is expected that the student-athlete will place a high priority on practice time.

- Each coach will develop a practice schedule for the season that is coordinated with the Athletic Director, understanding that changes are expected. Practices will begin and end promptly at the scheduled time.
- Student-athletes are expected to attend whenever there is a practice/game unless they have permission from their coach to be absent. Excused absences from practice/games are granted for personal illness, death in the family, or special family/church occasions. The absence will be excused by the coach and should be communicated with the coach to be excused.
- Practices/games missed for work and outside functions are not encouraged. These events, although valuable, are not excused if it conflicts with the athletic schedule without approval from the coach.
- Student-athletes must attend the entire practice/game. Early dismissals are not permitted unless approved before the practice/game by the coach.
- Practice and/or game misses may result in the reduction of playing time. The coach has the authority to make these decisions.

- An excessive unexcused absence may result in dismissal from the team. The coach's attendance records will stand as the final authority when computing absences. The coach will communicate excessive absences to the Athletic Director. Together they will communicate with the athlete and parent about the dismissal from the team and the reason for the dismissal.
- Required practices are held on school days only. Fall sports begin in August, two full weeks before school starts; winter sports on November 1; and spring sports begin after the varsity basketball seasons are over. Saturday practices are permitted with approval from the Athletic Director. Vacation day practices (i.e., Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Spring Break) are to be attended if the student-athlete is in town. Every effort should be made to participate in games during vacation days. Absence from vacation day practices must be communicated with the coach. The coach has the authority to make playing time decisions based on vacation day practice misses.
- Injured student-athletes who cannot physically participate are expected to attend all practices and games to support their team. Practice exceptions are for physical therapy or other medical-related appointments. Injured athletes will sit on the bench with the team during all games.
- Any student-athlete that will not attend a practice or game due to an excused absence must *personally* notify the coach as far in advance as possible. If the coach does not work at GCA, please notify the Athletic Director.

CONDUCT AND DRESS

The student-athlete is strategically positioned to give others a picture of our school, and it should not be taken lightly. Student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen – on and off the field or court as well as be a testimony of Jesus Christ by their actions and words. Additionally, student-athletes should take pride in their personal appearance, understanding that their appearance is a reflection of GCA.

- If any student-athlete willfully damages the property of GCA or that of any opposing school, that student-athlete is liable for the damage and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
- Student-athletes will show proper respect for their teammates, coaches, officials, and fans at all times. Taunting or disrespect toward opposing players, coaches, fans, or referees is not tolerated.
- As a minimum, the student-athlete will adhere to the GCA dress code at all home and away games as defined in the student handbook. Student-athletes arriving from other athletic events (games or practice) are permitted to remain without having to change clothes.
- Individual coaches may set special standards for game days or special situations (such as tournaments) with the approval of the Athletic Director.
- No jewelry (including visible body piercing objects) shall be worn in any sport, practice, or game.

SPORTSMANSHIP CODE

As in all athletics areas, it is expected that our student-athletes and fans conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner. Our faculty and administration are committed to promoting a high level of sportsmanship in such a way that avoids belittling others. Uncompromising respect for referees and officials is the standard. A focus on winning is best tempered by an attitude of mutual respect. It is understood that watching any GCA athletic contest is a privilege and not a right. The following guidelines will be adhered to during all athletic competitions:

- Be reverent during prayer and the national anthem.
- Cheer for our team and not against anyone. Do not “boo” or make degrading remarks to anyone (i.e., opposing players, opposing fans, referees). Be positive! Do not question the abilities of a player on our team and/or the decisions made by a coach. If you have a question about what a coach is doing, approach the coach and ask your question in a manner to provide clarification. Questioning a coach regarding starting line-ups and/or schematic decisions is not appropriate.
- Coaches are the only individuals that are to communicate with game officials. Parents, players, and fans are to refrain from making comments to officials.

- Avoid anything that tends toward destructiveness or misuse of property, such as beating on the sides of the gym or banging on the bleachers.
- Inappropriate and disruptive noises should not be made during games.
- Remain off the playing floor or field, including before the contest begins, during halftimes or other breaks in the action, and after the game is over.
- Abuse of any of these spectator guidelines may result in removal from the premises.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Participation in athletics is an honor, and a privilege as our student-athletes are a public example to other students. Violation of the guidelines in this manual will result in disciplinary action (i.e., game suspension or team dismissal). Together, the athletic director, administration, and head coach have the authority to remove an athlete from any team when necessary.

- **Technical Fouls/Cautions/Ejections.** Any athlete receiving a conduct technical foul, unsportsmanlike caution (yellow/red card), or a verbal caution will result in discussion with the head coach as deemed necessary. Any student-athlete receiving a red card or technical in two consecutive games is immediately removed from that game/match and the next game/match. Any additional conduct fouls/cautions will result in a meeting with the coach, the student-athlete, the parents, and the Athletic Director for further disciplinary actions.
- Any student-athlete receiving two detentions in a semester (other than for tardies) will be deemed ineligible for the next contest their team competes. Each subsequent detention after the second detention will result in the student being deemed ineligible for the appropriate number of games. Excessive detentions will result in a meeting with the coach, the student-athlete, the parents, and the athletic director for further disciplinary actions.
- An individual leaving a squad without the coach's permission or because of an athletic rule violation forfeits all awards and may not participate on any other athletic team that same sports season.
- Any conduct on a team-sanctioned trip or during a team-sanctioned event that compromises the integrity of the athletic department or the school can result in dismissal from the athletic team and may result in removal from athletics at Grace.

UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT, AND FEES

Good stewardship is vital as we take care of what has been provided for us. Therefore, all equipment must be handled with respect.

- Uniforms are used for games only. They are not to be worn except for a game for which they have been specified. This means that student-athletes are not to wear them in PE class or for any other occasion without permission from the Athletic Director. Coaches who would like their teams to wear uniforms to school may allow their teams to do so.
- Uniforms are the property of GCA and are to be returned clean at the completion of every athletic season. If a uniform is not returned or is damaged, the student-athlete must pay the replacement cost unless the uniform was paid for by the student.

PLAYING TIME POLICY

There are no playing time requirements. Parents and student-athletes should understand that playing time is determined by skill level. It is implicitly understood that attitude, commitment, and work ethic are major components to be considered as well. It is left to the coach's discretion as they build their team and each player's skill level is developed.

TOURNAMENTS

Grace teams have the opportunity to participate in tournaments that sometimes require an overnight stay. Student-athletes are responsible for the cost of accommodations and their meals. Student-athletes are expected to adhere to all school codes of conduct while on these trips.

GAME CANCELLATION POLICY

Games are often canceled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.

- Authority to cancel games: The athletic director makes the final decision to cancel games.
- Authority to cancel practices: The team head coach will make the final decision regarding canceling practices.
- Announcement: During school hours, information is passed to the classrooms. Additionally, the cancellation will be posted on the GCA website, and/or a parent alert will be sent to notify parents.

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

- Best efforts will be made to provide school transportation for all student-athletes to games.
- When transportation is provided, all student-athletes must ride in school-provided transportation to away games. The student-athlete may return home with a parent provided the parent signs for the athlete to ride home with them on the appropriate form.
- Transportation plans for games will be announced to the student-athletes. If parent transportation is necessary, this information will be communicated in advance.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Awards are important in a person's life, and we recognize our student-athletes for their God-given ability and achievement and as a means of motivation. Each individual sports team will conduct an individual award ceremony at the conclusion of that sports season. This ceremony will be set up by the sports coach in conjunction with the athletic director.

- To earn a high school letter, a student-athlete must participate in one sport for one year. If a player "letters" the player will receive a letter "G" with the appropriate pin (ball of the sport played) and a bar. Each year after that, when that same player "letters" again, they will receive another "bar" pin for the same sport. Any Student-athletes unable to complete a season due to injury, illness, or other such circumstances may earn an award if the coach feels it is justified.
- One student-athlete from each GCA team (JH, JV, and Varsity) will receive an award recognizing Christian character (The Crusader Award). To be eligible for this award, the student-athlete must be a full-time student at GCA. Coaches will award up to three additional trophies at the discretion of the Athletic Director, based upon overall statistics and contribution to the team.
- Student-athletes who play at the varsity level in at least three sports in a school year are eligible for the Triple Letter Award if they meet the individual team letter requirements.
- The top senior athlete is chosen for the Dallas Washer Award by the Athletic Director and Administration.

- **Criteria for lettering:**
Varsity letters are earned by reaching the following goals
Volleyball Play at least half of the games.
Soccer Play at least half of the halves.
Basketball Play at least half of the quarters.
Softball/Baseball Play at least half of the innings.

HOMESCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETES

Grace Christian Academy does allow Homeschool Students to participate in the athletic program. An application and guidelines are in place to regulate their participation. This information is in the school office.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Any time parents or student-athletes have problems, they are directed to attempt to work them out with the source. If no solution is accomplished, the problem should go to the next level progressively until it is solved. For example, a problem with an assistant coach should be directed to that coach first. If further assistance is needed, it should be directed to the head coach at that level, followed progressively by the athletic director, the administration, and the school board.

CHANGES

ALL CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT ARE UNDER THE DISCRETION OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND/OR SCHOOL BOARD.

Parent Signature/Acknowledgement

Student Signature/Acknowledgement