

Grace Christian School



Student and Parent Athletic Handbook 2017-2018

Philosophy of Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities

At GCS, we believe athletics are an integral part of the educational experience. Athletics are important but should not take the place of academics, church or family commitments. We also believe every student has been gifted with various abilities. While it is impossible for every student to be involved in athletics, we encourage every student to explore his/her God-given capabilities in the athletic opportunities provided at GCS.

Participation in athletics and all other extra-curricular activities is a great way for students to build a relationship with God and be a witness to teammates and opponents. The benefits of participating in athletics and extra-curricular activities are innumerable and can be a tool to spread God's word. In Romans 12:1, the Bible says, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship."

The athletic department will function in cooperation with the overall philosophy and mission of Grace Christian School. The primary purpose for athletics at GCS is to glorify God. The athletes, the facilities, the coaches, the contests, and the fans of GCS all belong to God and exist to be used by Him for His purposes. The GCS Athletic Handbook discusses how matters of school discipline impact athletes and their participation in practice and contests. When student join a Warrior athletic team, they agree to live by a higher standard, since they voluntarily wear the uniform of the Grace Christian School Warriors.

Parents play a vital role in the success of a student athlete. It is our expectation that all parents be positive, supportive and encouraging to all players, coaches and opponents. Parents and spectators should cheer not only for the goals and shots made, but also for the successes of all players no matter how big or small.

Lastly, parents should be a support system to the coaches and frequently ask how they can help. Parent/coach conflicts should be handled gently, privately and with a prayerful heart. Gossiping with other parents about the faults of the coach and/or other players and students is beneficial to no one and will not be tolerated.

Goals of the Program

The goals of the GCS Athletic program are to:

- Represent the person of Jesus Christ in the area of athletic competition
- Allow students to use their God-given physical abilities and talent

- Develop student athletes who are playing to glorify and honor God as well as develop discipline and self-controlled attitudes
- Teach our students the benefit of physical fitness, training and competition as a means to take care of God's temple
- Teach the value of athletic competition, leadership and teamwork

Vision of the Program

The vision for our program is reflected in our athletes, coaches, parents and department as a whole.

- Athletes who genuinely have a love for God and the confidence to represent Him at all times on and off the field
- Coaches who love their athletes, work hard to improve team skills, and model leadership and humility to everyone they come in contact with
- Parents who support and pray for our coaches and athletes, and volunteer time toward the improvement of our athletic program
- An Athletic Department and Administration that is organized, dedicated, involved, and excited about the successes of our athletic teams

Discipline

Students participating in extra-curricular activities must abide by all policies in the GCS Student/Parent Handbook. With permission from the athletic director, coaches may suspend players from practice, from a game or from the team if it is deemed necessary.

As a Christian school, it is of the utmost importance that every player's actions are consistent with what we believe. All coaches and players must set a Christ-like example to their opponents.

Try-outs/Player Selections

Try-outs should be held in the first 3-4 days of practice. The number of players on a team varies from sport to sport and depends on the number of students who try-out.

At GCS, we believe that it is most beneficial to cut players and let them pursue other interests rather than keeping every student who tries out for a particular sport. If a player is cut, he may approach the coach about becoming a student

manager. Team selections will be discussed by the coach and athletic director before any cuts are made.

Practice Length/Sunday/Non-School Days

Practices shall not exceed more than 2 hours per day. Practices will be in the afternoon or early evening. Practices will not begin after 7pm. Wednesday practices must be finished by 5pm. We do not in any way want to interfere with youth groups, prayer groups or Bible studies. No games will be scheduled on Wednesdays.

They should only be held in the morning. Sunday practices are prohibited without exception. We believe Sunday is a time to spend with the church and with family.

Optional practices may be held during school breaks, but not on these holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas
- New Years Eve
- New Years Day
- Good Friday
- Easter
- Memorial Day

Players cannot be reprimanded for missing practices over official school breaks.

Practice & Event Guidelines

Students who miss more than half a school day are not permitted to practice or play in a game on that day without special permission from the administrator and the athletic director.

All words and actions by coaches, players and fans should be positive, uplifting and encouraging to others. We should all make every effort to follow the words of Galatians 5:22-24 and be positive witnesses for Jesus Christ.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:22-24

In games where we are leading by a large margin, coaches will model Christ-like decision-making. Coaches will avoid “running up the score” and consider how the outcome will reflect on Grace Christian School as well as how it will affect the players from the opposing team.

Coaches should limit discussion with officials to matters of rule interpretation. At no point should a coach dispute an official regarding a judgment call.

Coaches must report to the athletic director all occasions they, or a player, receive a yellow card, technical foul, ejection or any other sportsmanship related penalty.

At GCS, we believe all coaches, players and fans should ask themselves: “Is this game about my needs, wants and desires or is it about Jesus Christ? How do my words and actions reflect upon Christians?”

Ejections

Any ejection from a game whether it be of a coach or a player will result in an automatic two game suspension. Parents ejected from a game will likewise be asked not to return for two games.

The coach or player ejected will also have a mandatory meeting within two days of the game with the athletic director and the administrator to discuss the cause of the ejection and further disciplinary action if necessary.

Injury

Athlete care and injury reporting guidelines:

- 1) Athletes are to first report practice injuries to the coach/athletic director. All injuries and health concerns must be reported to the coach/athletic director.
- 2) The coach will initiate early first aid care. The coach will notify the athletic director of all injuries.
- 3) Injured athletes are expected to continue treatment and recovery period.
- 4) Parents are encouraged to contact their physician (and then follow up with the coach/AD) regarding any concerns or questions relating to their child’s injury.
- 5) All athletes missing practices or games due to injury must notify the coach/AD directly prior to that practice or game.

Return to activity following injury:

All athletes who have been removed from activity by the coach/athletic director and referred for physician evaluation must provide a note from the consulting physician prior to return to activity. In addition, all athletes who have been removed from activity by a physician must present a note from the physician clearing the athlete to reenter activity.

Concussion information:

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an “impulsive” force transmitted to the head. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.**

Even a mild bump to the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussions can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury.

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussions will be removed from play immediately by GCS coaches or the athletic director. Continuing to play puts young athletes at risk and vulnerable to greater injury. It is well known that an adolescent or teenage athlete will under report symptoms or injuries, and concussions are no different.

Grace Christian School requires the consistent and uniform implementation of an established return to play concussion guideline: 1) there will be immediate removal of an athlete from practice or a game when head injury (or suspected concussion) occurs, and 2) once evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion (i.e. Nationwide Children's Hospital Concussion Clinic), the athlete may not return to play without written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

Responsibilities of Coaches

The coach is to demonstrate a life under the control of the Holy Spirit. Coaches are to actively be involved in a Bible-teaching, discipleship church. The coach should not only strive to actively disciple athletes in his/her program but also lovingly present truth to opposing teams. Finally, the coach is to emphasize personal growth and character development.

The coach is to teach sport-related strategies and techniques to his/her players. The coach is to motivate and tap into the potential of each athlete. The coach is to provide a loving atmosphere as he/she instructs, and coaches are to encourage team unity.

Coaches are to construct and execute daily and weekly practice schedules. The coach should communicate with athletes and parents through apparent letter/email which details schedules, policies and transportation needs. Coaches are to record statistics and provide athletic award information to the athletic director at season's end. The coach is to have first aid equipment and medical release forms available at all times and attend HB251 Pupil Activity First Aid

Program. Coaches must also obtain and keep current a PAP Permit from the Ohio Department of Education.

Coaches may compile a list of rules and procedures that they desire their athletes to follow in their particular sport. This list is to be approved by the athletic director before it is distributed to the athletes. Potential cuts must be discussed with the athletic director before notifying athletes. Athletes will be personally notified by the coach.

Coaches, in partnership with the athletic director, are responsible for making sure each athlete has completed all necessary paperwork and payments through Final Forms (with e-signatures). A coach may not allow an athlete to participate in a tryout, practice, scrimmage or game unless all required forms have been completed through Final Forms.

The athletic director will provide an annual evaluation providing coaches with an assessment of how well they have fulfilled their responsibilities as well as their coaching strengths and weaknesses. This evaluation will also include suggestions for improvement.

Volunteer/Parent Coaches

Volunteering at GCS is always welcome, including in our athletic programs.

All volunteer coaches must be interviewed by the head coach to ensure proper knowledge of the sport they will be coaching, as well as to determine if they will be a positive, Christ-like role model to the athletes. The athletic director must approve all volunteers. Once approved, potential volunteer coaches must obtain an FBI and BCI background check. Once the results are returned, the coach may begin working with the team.

Please remember coaches—volunteer or paid—with children of their own on the team, must show no favoritism. If the coach does show favoritism, he will be asked to resign his position.

Practice Attendance

Consistent attendance at practice is expected of all student athletes. The only acceptable reasons for missing practice are because of a(n):

- Injury/illness
- Doctor's appointment
- Family emergency
- School Conflict (such as the Washington D.C. trip or an orchestra concert)

If a player is going to miss a practice, he/she should make every effort to notify the coach at least one day prior to the day of the practice. Repeated absences and/or unexcused absences can result in decreased playing time, suspensions and/or removal from the team.

If a player needs to miss a practice for a reason other than those mentioned above, it must be approved by his coach. If it is not approved, it will be counted as unexcused and the player should be prepared to accept the consequences of his/her actions.

Game Attendance

Games may only be missed because of a(n):

- Injury/illness
- Family emergency
- School conflict (such as the Washington D.C. trip or an orchestra concert)

Athletes should notify their coaches as soon as possible if they are going to miss a game. If a game is missed for an unexcused reason, the coach reserves the right to suspend the athlete for the next game.

Practice & Game Day Dress Apparel

Students may wear non-uniform clothes to practice, but should dress modestly and in an appropriate way to represent GCS. Students should not wear excessively short shorts and coaches should not ask students to play shirts vs. skins.

Appropriate footwear is required. Students may not practice barefoot, in socks or in dress shoes.

Jewelry is not permitted to be worn during games and practices. This includes necklaces, bracelets, anklets and earrings. Long hair should be pulled back with hair ties.

GCS-issued game uniforms are to be worn only for games—not for practice or P.E. Uniforms should be worn with modesty. Uniform shorts may not be rolled up.

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach or athletic director within a week of the last game. Postseason awards will be held if these items are not returned. If a player never returns a uniform, or if GCS determines excessive wear has taken place, he/she will be charged to replace it and may not participate in a sport the following season.

Athletic Participation Requirements

All students must have a completed OHSAA physical form (prefill on Final Forms, then print and take to your pediatrician), which includes a physician's signature, before competing in any practice, try-out or game. A physical form is valid for one calendar year from the date of completion and does not need to be repeated for additional sports played during the year.

All students are required to e-sign through Final Forms: The Athletic Participation Form, the Ohio Department of Health Concussion Form, the Informed Consent-Permission to Treat Form, the GCS Transportation Forms and the Emergency Medical Form. Athletic participation fees must also be paid through Final Forms.

Student-Athletes must be enrolled as a full-time student or homeschool student, must meet academic requirements and must accept all rules established by the coach.

Athletic Participation Fees

Students who participate in athletics are required to pay a fee at the beginning of each season. The fee for the first sport played in the school year is \$85 and the fee for the second and/or third sport played in the school year is \$55. Fees are to be paid within Final Forms.

Students still may be required to purchase items including uniforms, shoes and personal equipment (such as shin guards or knee pads).

Insurance

GCS recommends each family check with their insurance provider for coverage in the event of an injury during a school sponsored practice or game. Most companies provide additional insurance options for student athletes.

End of Season Programs & Awards

All players who complete an entire season are given an award at the end of the season. Individual awards will be given at the coach's discretion.

Managers

Student managers (not exceeding two) can be kept on a team at the coach's discretion. Student managers may be responsible for handling equipment, keeping statistics, running the scoreboard and/or setting up practices or games.

Student managers may participate in practices if the coach sees it as beneficial to the manager and to the team.

Student managers must follow the same academic policies student athletes are required to follow.

Conflict Resolution

At GCS, we follow the Matthew 18 Principle:

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over; if he will not listen, take one or two others along so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Matthew 18:15-16

Parents, if you have a dispute or disagreement with a coach, we ask that you go to him/her with an attitude of appeal. Be respectful and understanding of his/her response. Most situations are misunderstandings and can easily be resolved. If you are not satisfied with the resolution, please contact the athletic director to schedule a meeting with all parties involved.

Playing Time

Starters for games will be chosen by the head coach based on past performance, attitude and leadership. How much a student plays is at the coach's discretion, but we do encourage appropriate playing time.

Quitting a Team

Participation in athletics is highly encouraged at GCS. However, it is expected that if a student starts a sports season, he/she finishes it.

Students will be given a three-week grace period at the beginning of the season where if they decide that a certain sport is not for them, they may leave the team. If a student is considering quitting a team, he/she should set up a meeting with his/her coach or athletic director to discuss the situation. If a student does quit a team after the grace period is over, he/she will be ineligible to compete for the remainder of that sports season or the following sports season. We want to teach students the value of persistence and perseverance to overcome any obstacles that come their way

Parents Code of Conduct

Parents are expected to give their full support to their child, other players, coaches, opponents and officials. Parents should support the coaches by applauding behavior in your child and his/her teammates that demonstrates characteristics of integrity, empathy, sacrifice and responsibility.

Parents should not be verbally arrogant or angry with anyone at a game. Rather, parents are expected to serve as role models for our players, talking politely and acting courteously towards coaches, officials, other parents, visiting team parents and spectators at games.

When speaking with others, think BIG: Biblically, intelligently and courteously.

Parents should model good sportsmanship by acknowledging and applauding the efforts of team members and opponents. Defeat should be accepted graciously by congratulating the other members of the opposing team on a game well played.

Encourage student-athletes with positive statements, even when they make mistakes. Likewise, refrain from boasting about athlete accomplishments. Parents should guide their children to first speak to the team captain or coach if they have a concern. We want players to develop self-advocacy. If this conversation does not resolve the problem, the parent and student-athlete should meet with the coach together. The subsequent line of communication would be the athletic director and then the superintendent/principal.

Transportation

Transportation will be provided by parents. Coaches can only transport their own children to practices and games; they may not transport other athletes.

New Students

Students who arrive in the middle of a sports season will be given the opportunity to join a team if any positions are open.

Academic Eligibility

Students must maintain a Grade Point Average of 2.5 in order to participate on an athletic team. GPA will be checked at mid-term and the end of each quarter. In addition to GPA, any student who has at least 2 D's and/or at least 1 F will be ineligible for practices and games the following week. Grades will be checked every Friday during the season. Students with a GPA below 2.5 at the mid-term or end of the quarter will also have to miss the following week of games and/or practices with grades being checked again the next Friday.

Home School Students

GCS is open to home school students being a part of our athletic program. There are requirements for these students to meet in order to participate on a GCS team. Please refer to the Home School Policy at www.gcsblacklick.org.