

# Grace Christian School



## Student and Parent Athletic Handbook 2024-2025

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## 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 by God with various talents 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 a student joins 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 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 always represent Him on and off the field.
- Coaches who love their athletes, work hard to improve team skills, and model leadership and humility to everyone with whom they come in contact.
- 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 and Grades 5-8 Assistant Principal, coaches may suspend players from practice, from a game or from the team if it is deemed necessary. This includes matters of behavior and/or academic standards.

## 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/she 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.

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.

In volleyball and girls' basketball, GCS will only play against teams that consist of all female students. If it comes to our attention that an opposing team is using any students who are born as male, we reserve the right to cancel that game.

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.

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?"

## **Cell Phones/Technology**

Students are not permitted to use cell phones and other similar electronic devices during athletic practices and games. Students are permitted to have them in case of emergency or need to contact their family and can use them with permission from their coach, the athletic director or the school administrator.

Students using their cell phone during practices or games will have the device confiscated until it can be claimed by their family.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for cell phone usage including a fine, suspension or removal from the team.

## **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**

Players will be excused from practices and games if they are injured. If a player misses three or more consecutive practices because of injury, he/she must be cleared by a doctor to return.

If a player becomes unconscious for any reason, he/she may not continue to participate that day and must have a signed doctor's note before returning to practice or a game.

## **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 a FBI and BCI background check. Once the results are returned, the coach may begin working with the team.

## 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/her 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 should only be missed because of a(n):

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

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, he/she will be charged to replace it and may not participate in a sport the following season.

## **OHSAA Physicals**

All students must have a completed OHSAA physical form, 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.

## **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 a certificate and athletic pin at the end of the season. Special individual awards will be given at the coach's discretion.

## **Managers**

Student managers 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.

## **Athletic Participation Fees**

Students who participate in athletics are required to pay a fee at the beginning of each season. Additional fees for required equipment may also be applied.

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

## **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.

## **Parents Code of Conduct**

Parents are expected to give their full support to their child, other players, coaches, opponents, and officials.

Parents should not be verbally arrogant or angry with anyone at a game.

Parents should help their children be dependable and accountable by communicating with them about practice and game schedules.

## Transportation

Parents are responsible for getting their child(ren) to and from all games. GCS is not able to provide team transportation. Families are encouraged to carpool when transportation assistance is needed.

## 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

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.

## 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](http://www.gcsblacklick.org).

## Warrior Code

A Warrior **Accepts Responsibility, Demonstrates Humility, Leads Courageously and Rejects Passivity**

**Courageous:** Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid of them! The LORD your God will go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6)

**Loyalty:** For I desire loyalty and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

**Kindness:** What is desired in a man is kindness, And a poor man is better than a liar. (Proverbs 19:22)

**Humility:** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. (Philippians 2:3)

**Honesty:** Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. (Ephesians 4:25)

**Self-discipline:** Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

**Perseverance:** Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

**Excellence:** Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

**Integrity:** People with integrity have firm footing, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall. (Proverbs 10:9)

**Servant-leadership:** But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must become your servant. (Matthew 20:26-27)