

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

1. INTRODUCTION AND PHILOSOPHY

The mission of Grace Christian School (GCS) is to produce Christ-centered citizens who will be a transforming influence on their world. Athletics are an integral part of this process. In today's society, much of the emphasis in athletics is the importance of winning. At GCS, our perspective is based on the following biblical principles:

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17, ESV)

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men. (Col. 3:23 ESV)

These principles put winning in a proper perspective and yet do not diminish the importance of the outcome. We expect athletes and coaches to give their best, and to try to win. Individual success at the team, region, and state level is the dream of most athletes, and we hope that all GCS athletes will experience the thrill of performing well, of winning, of rising to one's potential. Yet the highest goal is to live a life that honors God. Maintaining this balanced perspective will allow athletes to be and do their best.

The Athletic Department, in conjunction with the school board and the administration, makes rules that govern athletic competition at GCS; this handbook is written to establish the policies of the GCS athletic programs. The policies apply both to high school and junior high athletics, unless stated otherwise. Reference to the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) applies only to high school athletics because ASAA does not regulate junior high programs.

2. A WORD TO PARENTS

You are reading this handbook because your son or daughter wants to participate in sports. We value your family's interest in athletics and believe that athletic participation provides a wealth of opportunities and experiences for students. Parents play an essential role in the overall experience of their student's participation in athletics. Here are some ways that you can support your child and the school and provide key elements that will contribute to your child's success.

- Attend as many games or contests as you can. Your presence is meaningful to your athlete and shows support for the school.
- Be positive and supportive without adding undue pressure or unrealistic expectations. Try to be objective in regard to your player's skill level and role on the team. Let your child know that you believe in him or her regardless of performance or outcome.
- Express support for the coach's judgment, character, and actions, whether or not you fully agree. This will help your child do the same. Remember that all players, no matter how capable, sometimes need correction or redirection by a coach.
- Be flexible. Despite careful planning, schedule changes sometimes need to be made.
- Build up and speak well of other team members.
- Volunteer to help the athletic department with tournaments, admissions, etc.

- If you have a question or concern, express it to the appropriate person (most often the coach) in a constructive way at an appropriate time. See section 16 – Conflict Resolution.

3. PARENT AND SPECTATOR SPORTSMANSHIP

The role of spectators is very important in athletics. The character and testimony of GCS and our employees, parents, and students are on display at athletic events, and we aim to exemplify Christ-likeness in all aspects of athletics, including spectator participation. **GCS parents/guardians, students, employees, and spectators are expected to cheer for and support the school's athletes, teams and coaches in a way that is positive, constructive, and gives honor to Christ. The same is expected toward opponents, opposing fans, and officials. The following behavior is not acceptable at an athletic contest which GCS is hosting or in which GCS is participating: booing, jeering, cursing, mocking, taunting, and negative comments to officials, coaches, athletes and others.** A game official, the school administrator or a designee, and the Athletic Director have authority to remove a person from an athletic contest for unsportsmanlike behavior. In the event of violation of this policy, the school administration and Athletic Director may deny the person the right to attend future athletic contests and could also restrict or limit the family's participation in GCS programs.

If you see or hear a spectator whose behavior concerns you, ask yourself whether there is something you can do about it. Maybe you can put a friendly hand on the shoulder of an overexcited fellow spectator. Maybe you or someone who knows the person can talk with him or her and communicate the concerns. If necessary, you could discuss the situation with the AD or a GCS administrator. And you can always set the example of good and positive sportsmanship. If you yourself sometimes get caught up in the moment and might not always display good sportsmanship, you are not alone. Consider asking a friend to help you and tell you if you step out of line. Athletic competitions can be heated and emotional. We understand this! Let's work together so that our athletic events have an atmosphere worthy of our school's Christian purpose.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT ATHLETES

Wearing the Maroon and Gold of GCS carries important responsibilities. A great athletic program is not built overnight; it takes the hard work of many people over years. As a member of a sports team at GCS, you have inherited a wonderful tradition, one you are challenged to uphold. *Our tradition has been to glorify God by winning with honor and losing with grace.* Our desire is to win, but only if in so doing we honor God.

Christians are Ambassadors for Christ and the Light of the World. As a member of a GCS athletic team, your most important responsibility is to be a good representative of God and let your light shine before men (Matt. 5:16). As an athlete, you are on stage. Younger students will watch and copy you in many ways. Other schools and our community evaluate our school based on your conduct and attitudes, on and off the field of play. Work hard to set a good example.

A student-athlete is voluntarily making a choice of self-discipline and self-denial. Each participant is expected to discipline the mind and body for rigorous competition. We do not

want our athletes to compromise or accept mediocrity. Be diligent in your academic studies, so that your entire school experience is preparation for success as an adult.

The athlete is in control of his/her effort and attitude. If an athlete's goal is to honor God, this should be reflected in the effort that person gives in practice and games and the attitude shown in practices and games (e.g. in the athlete's reaction to a difficult loss, a questionable call by an official, or an unkind action by a teammate.) These are areas of life over which the athlete has control: response, effort, and attitude.

5. GOVERNANCES

Grace Christian School: The Athletic Director (AD) oversees the athletic programs. Participants are responsible to coaches, who report to the AD, who in turn reports to the secondary principal.

Alaska School Activities Association: Member schools voluntarily join ASAA and compete only with other member high schools in Alaska or member schools of other states. As a member school, GCS agrees to abide by and enforce all ASAA rules and regulations, including those regarding individual eligibility, attendance, grades, age, awards, school representation, and transfers between schools. The primary role of ASAA is to ensure equity in competition for the student-athletes and a balance with other educational programs. ASAA is also responsible for all state playoffs and tournaments beyond region play for athletics and activities. A complete summary of all ASAA rules can be found at asaa.org.

National Federation of State High School Associations: The Federation consists of the fifty individual state high school athletic/activities associations. Its purpose is to coordinate the work of all of its members. GCS plays all athletic contests under the governing rules of the NFHS.

High School Regions: GCS is a member of Region III which consists of Class 3A/Division II and 4A/Division I schools assigned by ASAA. Within Region III we are classified as 3A. Region membership provides the opportunity for competition with schools of similar size and programs, and facilitates arranging schedules, conducting region meets, and determining region championships.

Junior High Sports: The GCS junior high teams compete with junior high teams from Region III schools in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley and other Christian schools.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

a. Academics: Students must have passed at least five semester credits during the previous semester, and must be currently enrolled and passing in at least five semester credits. For seniors, they must be currently enrolled in at least four semester credits.

Part time homeschool students are required to provide progress reports when grade checks are completed for sports eligibility. This report shall list the current courses they are enrolled in through their homeschool program and grade earned to date. They also must have a C or better in their class(es) at Grace to be eligible for sports.

b. High School Grades: A student must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and no F's for the previous quarter or at the semester. Students failing to meet those criteria at any quarter or at the semester will be automatically ineligible for three weeks. During the following quarter, grade checks will be made every three weeks to determine if the student will be eligible to participate. If a student has been able to bring grades to an acceptable level at one of the three week grade checks, they will be eligible to participate until the next quarter grade check.

c. Junior High Grades: A student must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 and no F's for the previous quarter or at the semester as well as each three week grade check. Students failing to meet those criteria will be ineligible until the next three week grade check.

d. Age: A student who turns 19 on or before August 1 is ineligible for athletic competition.

e. Multiple Sports: An athlete may participate in only one sport per season.

f. Attendance: Students participating in athletics are required to be in attendance at school the full day their activity is to take place (this includes practices and competitions). **Being tardy over 20 minutes constitutes an absence from school, which means the student is ineligible to participate in any practice or game that day.** Reasonable time for doctor or dental appointments is the only exception; a written note is needed for verification of the appointment, and permission to participate in athletics must be obtained from the AD or principal.

g. Conduct Eligibility: A student who receives a detention or extension must serve it at the earliest scheduled detention or extension time. A student who is suspended may not participate in any activities the day of the suspension. A student who is suspended from school for behavior, attitude, or absences shall be ineligible for a period of time determined by the AD or principal, usually starting from the first day of suspension or the day of infraction.

h. Physical Examination: High school athletes must submit a physical examination report by a physician, advanced nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or military medical examiner. It must be signed by the student's parents/guardians certifying that the physical examination was performed within the prior 18 months. Record of this must be on file through the online registration before the official start date of any sport practice.

i. Sports Fees: \$100.00 for each high school sport, \$75.00 for each junior high sport. Fees will be charged to your FACTS acct after the first competition.

j. Registration & Required ASAA Forms: The following forms must be completed by the parent/guardian for each sport in which a student-athlete participates. The forms must be completed through the online registration site PlanetHS.com.

- Parent/Guardian Consent for Travel and Participation Form.
- Tobacco, Alcohol & Drug Free Acknowledgement (TAD). A short video is required to be viewed by parent and student. The form and video are on the GCS website.
- Verification of Receipt of Information Concerning Concussions. An informational guide on concussions must be read and signed by both parent and student.

- Sudden Cardiac Arrest Form (SCA). This form must be read and signed by both the parent and student.

7. ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT FUNDING

The athletic department at GCS is not funded through tuition. Funds are raised through sports fees, concessions, admissions/gate fees, GCS sports camps, the hot lunch program, Cup of Grace, and corporate athletic sponsors. If you would like to learn about becoming a sponsor, please contact the athletic department.

Admission is charged for most athletic contests at GCS, and spectators should expect to pay admission charges for contests hosted at other schools. Athletic passes are available for purchase on an individual or family basis. See the athletic department for details.

8. ATHLETIC CODES OF CONDUCT

1. Sportsmanship: Athletes shall display good sportsmanship and shall not engage in conduct that shows disrespect to team members, opponents, spectators, officials, or coaches. This includes intimidation, bullying, “trash talk,” jeering, taunting, booing, etc.

2. Hazing/Harassment/Bullying: Hazing, harassment, and bullying are not to be a part of the GCS athletic program. Hazing includes an initiation process conducted against a team member. Any behavior directed toward another student that denigrates or endangers the mental or physical health or safety of the student for the purpose of initiation or admission into or continued membership on any such team is not acceptable behavior. This behavior will be handled according to the GCS student handbook.

3. Game Behavior: If a high school player is ejected by an official for an unsportsmanlike act (such as fighting), the AD will notify ASAA of the ejection and that player, at a minimum, will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled contest. More severe consequences could occur depending on the infraction.

4. Student Handbook Applies – In all aspects of participation in athletics, whether during or outside of school hours, including practices, games, events, travel, and the entirety of any team-related trips, the GCS student handbook applies to participating students.

9. MISSING PRACTICES/CONTESTS

When an athlete joins a team, a commitment to attend the entire season of practices and contests is made by the athlete as well as the parents/guardians. If an athlete will miss a practice or contest, the coach should be consulted as soon as possible. Missing a practice or contest will generally result in some team-specific consequences.

Athletes should finish each season. In the unusual case where an athlete and parent agree that dropping a sport mid-season is necessary, the athlete needs to consult with the coach. An athlete who drops a sport may not begin practicing another sport until the first season is complete.

10. EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS

School equipment is the responsibility of the athlete who checks it out. The athlete is expected to keep it clean and in good condition. Equipment and uniforms are to be used only in practice or contests or as directed by the coach, and not worn or used in PE class or at other times. Loss of equipment is the financial obligation of the athlete up to full replacement value. Fees may be charged for late return of equipment/uniforms. No athlete will be allowed to participate in a sport until previously issued equipment/uniforms are returned or proper restitution made.

In some high school sports athletes may be required to purchase a portion of the game uniform, which will become their property.

11. TRAVEL

Transportation to away games and contests will be provided by the school via bus and shuttle. (On occasion, when a contest is held outside of school hours at a school near GCS, teams may be directed to meet at that site.) A parent/guardian who attends an away contest may drive a student home after signing out with the coach. *Any other plans must be pre-arranged in writing with the AD.* Athletes may not ride to or from away contests with other athletes.

While traveling for GCS athletic events, including in transport and during stops, students are expected to behave respectfully and obey the directives of the coach, chaperones, and driver as well as follow applicable laws. GCS athletes will keep the vehicles clean, remain seated and belted when applicable, maintain a suitable level of volume in speaking, and show the drivers appreciation. When traveling to sites off campus, athletes must have, on their person, gear that will keep them protected in case of an emergency stop. This means appropriate dress in winter, including boots, gloves, hats, warm coat, and other gear as directed.

An estimated return time from trips is usually given to the team members before a trip. A coach must wait until all students have been picked up. Please be timely in picking up your student.

12. MISSING CLASS

It is the student's responsibility to pre-arrange make-up work for the class(es) to be missed. Teachers are allowed their own classroom policy within the guidelines stated here. It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of all policies regarding homework, quizzes, tests, and projects due. Following an absence, the student is given one day for each day absent, up to five days, for make-up. Work not completed within this time without prior permission from the teacher for an extension will not receive credit. If a test is given on a Friday and the student misses it, the student is required to make-up the test on Monday unless otherwise arranged with the teacher. If a student is in attendance for any part of the school day, all work due that day must be turned in.

13. CONFLICTS AMONG EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Scheduling conflicts may arise between athletic events and other school activities such as music.

Sometimes, a student will need to choose between activities prior to the season, such as playing on an athletic team or having a role in a drama production. A student should not expect to miss practice to try out for another activity without prior permission from the coach.

Students are responsible to track the schedule for their school activities, and promptly inform the coach of conflicts. The following priority guidelines are to assist in dealing with these conflicts:

- ASAA sanctioned activity.
- Contests that are a criteria for advancement to a higher level of competition, such as a regional or state tournament.
- Competitions and performances that determine region qualification or seeding.
- Regularly scheduled events, which take priority over a rescheduled or added event.
- How important the student's participation is to the group's performance.

If the above guidelines do not resolve the conflict, the final decision will be made by the student in consultation with the principal. No penalty will be assessed to the student.

14. SQUAD SELECTION/PLAYING TIME

Usually no limitations are put on participants in Cross Country Running, Cross Country Skiing, Clay Shooting, Wrestling, and Track. Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, and Soccer teams typically have squad size limits. The coach and AD will make the final decision regarding the most effective squad size for a team in a given season.

Students who make a team will not necessarily see equal playing time. No amount of participation time is guaranteed to any athlete. Playing time depends on the skill and experience of the athlete and the philosophy of the coach. **Varsity squads will consist of the best players, regardless of grade.** At high school levels below varsity athletes will generally participate in all contests, but there may be occasions when this does not happen.

In the junior high programs, coaches will aim for students to see playing time at every competition under normal conditions. The amount of time will not necessarily be equal, but junior high student-athletes can expect to experience game situations.

15. COACH POLICIES

In addition to this handbook, each coach may establish rules or standards for the team. Coach policies will be consistent with this handbook and other school policies. Coach policies shall be provided to and approved by the AD. A coaches handbook is made available to all coaches.

16. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a conflict or concern arises between an athlete or parent and a coach, the first step is for the athlete/parent to discuss the situation with the coach. If no resolution is reached, the next step is a meeting with the AD and coach, and then, if necessary, a meeting with a principal. Parents should not try to address a concern with a coach immediately after a game. The parent should

instead schedule an appointment the next day or another suitable time. If an athlete has a concern, it is the responsibility of the athlete, not the parents, to address the issue with the coach.

Remember that the coach is the designated person in charge of the team. Parents may not understand or agree with all of the coach's philosophies or decisions, but are asked to be willing, despite disagreement, to give the benefit of the doubt and show support.

17. REPORTING OF INJURY

All injuries which occur while participating in athletics at GCS must be reported to the coach. If an injury requires medical attention, an injury report must be completed. Also, before the athlete will be allowed to resume practice, a note from the treating physician giving the athlete permission to participate must be received by the Athletic Department.

18. PERSONAL BELONGINGS/VALUABLES

It is the athlete's responsibility to secure personal belongings at GCS or when traveling to other schools. Money and valuables should not be left unprotected. The school is not responsible for any loss that may occur.

19. SPORTS SEASON/PRACTICES

1. ASAA Regulations. Each year ASAA establishes start/end dates for the fall, winter, and spring seasons, and the various high school sports are scheduled within these dates. For all sports, an athlete must have ten physical practice days before the first competition.

2. Practices. Practices are normally Monday through Friday. After-school practices will end by 8:30 pm, on Wednesdays by 6:30 pm. Morning practices begin as early as 6:00 am and end by 7:45 am. Occasional practices may occur on Saturday with approval of the AD. Some practices will be held during school vacation or days when school is not in session. There will be no practices on Sunday. Teams may practice off campus depending on availability of gym/facilities. Coaches or another approved adult must be present at all practices. All adults leading practice must be cleared by the AD and submit a background check.

3. Weather-Related Problems. Weather sometimes causes delays or cancellations. When school is canceled due to weather, contests are automatically canceled. Sometimes changing conditions allow practices to occur, with the approval of the principal. If school is canceled for other reasons, case by case decisions will be made regarding contests and practices. Cancelled region games are usually rescheduled for the first available date after cancellation.

20. ATHLETIC AWARDS

1. Varsity Letter Requirements.

The high school varsity award shall be presented to an athlete who satisfies the participation requirements as listed by the coach, completes all team obligations, and receives the recommendation of the coach. Each sport has specific requirements set by the team coach.

These requirements are on file in the athletic office.

2. Lettering Criteria That Pertain to All Varsity Sports.

- An athlete who moves from one level of competition to another will receive his/her award at the higher level, provided the athlete has met the combined requirements.
- A coach will have the prerogative to letter a senior who has not met the seasonal requirements for lettering.
- An athlete who plays regularly and was thereafter injured may be awarded a letter if in the coach's judgment the athlete would have met the lettering requirements.
- An athlete must complete the season in good standing with the school and coach.

3. Letter Awards.

- The first varsity award will be a chenille letter, certificate, and sport emblem. Second and subsequent varsity letters will be a certificate and sports bar.
- All other athletes will be awarded a participant certificate.

21. COLLEGE RECRUITMENT

For some high school athletes, preparation for college athletics is a byproduct of participation in athletics, and many GCS athletes have and will continue to compete at the college level. It is important for an athlete to work with their coach and the AD who may be able to assist in making contacts with college programs. Any athlete who anticipates competing at an NCAA Division I or II college must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse through the counseling department or athletic department. A very small percentage of Alaskan athletes will gain a "full ride" athletic scholarship to college.

22. GCS ATHLETIC TEAMS

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Fall Sports - Girls

Cross-Country Running
Clay Shooting
Volleyball

Winter Sports - Girls

Cross-Country Skiing
Basketball

Spring Sports - Girls

Soccer
Track & Field

Fall Sports - Boys

Cross-Country Running
Clay Shooting
Wrestling

Winter Sports - Boys

Cross-Country Skiing
Basketball

Spring Sports - Boys

Soccer
Track & Field
Baseball

JUNIOR HIGH SPORTS

6th grade participation is encouraged in JH sports but is dependent upon team size.

Fall Sports - Girls

Cross-Country Running

Basketball

Winter Sports - Girls

Volleyball

Cross-Country Skiing

Spring Sports - Girls

Track & Field

Fall Sports - Boys

Cross-Country Running

Basketball

Winter Sports - Boys

Wrestling

Cross-Country Skiing

Spring Sports - Boys

Track & Field