



ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

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A MINISTRY OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Member of ACSI

Introduction

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. 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 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.

- A life –long love for athletics
- Positive attitudes, good sportsmanship on and off the field
- A safe playing environment
- Development of all student-athletes to their maximum potential
- Respect for fellow players, coaches, teams, game officials and for the rules of the game

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 honour 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.

- Parents who support and pray for our coaches and athletes, and volunteer time toward the improvement of our athletic program
- 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
- An Athletic Director(s) that is organized, dedicated, involved, and excited about the successes of our athletic teams

Parents

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.

Additionally, 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.

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?"

Parents ejected from a game will be asked to not return for the next two games.

Parent-Volunteers

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 criminal record check. Once the results are returned, the volunteer coach may begin working with the team.

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 are asked to abide by the 24-hour rule regarding coaching concerns. Refrain from approaching coaching staff before during or after a game. Parents are strongly urged to encourage their student-athlete to talk directly to the coaching staff with any cares or concerns about playing issues that the student-athlete might have.

Chain of Command

In the event that there are questions concerning your student-athlete's role, or any other issue you would like to discuss, we will follow the chain of command in order to solve any issue.

1. Player to Coach
2. Player/Parent to Coach
3. Player/Parent to Athletic Director
4. Player/Parent to Principal

Parents Code of Conduct

Parents are expected to give their full support to their child, other players, coaches, opponents and officials. Parents are encouraged to attend games and support the team. At no time should parents coach, criticize, confront or make negative comments concerning the team, the opposition, the officiating or the coaching. Applause and cheers are always welcomed.

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

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PARENT:

- Make sure that your student-athlete is registered and has paid all necessary fees to the athletic director.
- Ensure that the student-athlete's uniform is washed and returned to the coach no less than one week after the season ends.
- Inform the coach of any medical conditions that your student-athlete might have.
- Know the game and practice schedule of your student-athlete.
- Arrange transportation to and from games and practice.
- Contact the coach personally if your child will be late or absent.
- Ensure that your student-athlete has all necessary equipment for all practices and games.

Athletes

Responsibilities and Expectations of the Player:

- Arrive at games and practices on time with all of the appropriate gear
- Perform up to your potential – be ready to try your best
- Listen to the coach and try to learn new skills. Practices go most smoothly when everyone respects the coach and the other team members.
- Maintain a positive and polite attitude towards your teammates, your coach, the opposing teams and the referee.

Try-outs/Player Selections

If necessary, 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.

Competition Level/Division

Student-athletes may not “play down” to a lower age division (senior high student-athletes may not play in junior high sports). Additionally, junior high student-athletes may not play in a senior high division sport if there is a junior high sport whose schedule conflicts with the senior high sport, except for circumstances as determined by the Athletic Director.

Playing for Other Schools

Permission may be granted to Student-Athletes to play for other schools’ athletics teams provided that there is not a scheduling conflict with a GCS sport in the same age division. The Athletic Director will have a meeting with the student-athlete to determine eligibility and acceptance. Students from other schools may also play for GCS, provided acceptance is given by the Athletic Director.

Practice Policies

- Practices shall not exceed more than 2 hours per day.
- Optional practices may be held during school breaks; players cannot be reprimanded for missing practices over official school breaks.
- Sunday practices are prohibited; we believe Sunday is a time to spend with the church and with family.
- 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.

Practice/Game Attendance

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

- Injury/illness
- Family emergency

If a player is going to miss a practice or a game, he should make every effort to notify the coach at least one day prior to the day of the practice or game. 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 or a game 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 actions.

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.

In games where we are leading by a large margin, student-athletes 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.

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?"

Any ejection from a game of a player due to unsportsmanlike conduct could result in an automatic two game suspension; they 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.

The coach will invoke a two-step system in regards to student-athletes who are not acting appropriately and showing disrespect to either their coaches/officials or teammates. The student-athlete will be placed on step one as a caution for bad behavior and warned that if it continues he/she will be asked to sit out playing time. If the student-athlete actions continue they will be forced to sit out the remainder of the game and possibly more. If this behavior persists the student athlete will have a meeting with the athletic director where other disciplinary actions will be sanctioned.

Injury

If a player becomes unconscious for any reason or experiences severe dizziness due to head trauma, he may not continue to participate that day and must see a doctor before returning to a future practice or game. If a player misses three or more consecutive practices because of injury, he must have a doctor's note before returning to a practice or game.

Practice & Game Day Dress Apparel

Student-Athletes may not wear official GCS game jerseys to practice, but should be dressed modestly and appropriately as representatives of GCS. They should also refrain from wearing any jewelry at practices and games.

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

GCS-issued game uniforms are to be worn only for games—not for practice or P.E.

On game days, student-athletes are representing the school to others and are expected to wear professional dress. Boys are to wear dress pants and dress shirt with a tie; girls are to wear dress pants and a dress shirt.

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach within a week of the last game. If a player does not return a uniform, he will be charged to replace it and may not participate in a sport the following season.

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:

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Athletic Fees

Students who participate in team athletics (currently soccer, volleyball, and basketball) are required to pay a fee to the Athletic Director at the beginning of each sport season. The fee for the first sport played in the school year is \$20 per athlete; if siblings are playing a sport in the same season, the fee is \$30 for the family (as opposed to paying individually)

If, as a family, you are unable to pay this, please inform the Athletic Director; we do not want an student-athlete to not participate due to financial need.

Participation fees cover equipment/fields and officials fees. Fees will not be refunded if a student quits a team after a one-week grace period. Students will not be able to participate in games until the athletic fee has been paid.

Playing Time

This is a competitive, extracurricular, inter-school program. Fair play does not mean equal playing time. Each student-athlete will be placed in the best possible position for the team to succeed. Those with greater knowledge, skill, and athletic ability will receive the most playing time. It will be the goal of the coach when possible to give each player the opportunity to play in each game.

Quitting a Team

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

Students will be given a one-week grace period beginning the day of the first game 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 should set up a meeting with his coach and athletic director to discuss the situation. If a student does quit a team after the grace period is over, he could 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.

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. These students should practice with the team for at least five days before participating in their first game, if possible.

Coaches

Those who coach student-athletes are teachers of athletics, who have a duty to ensure that their sports programs impart important life skills and promote character development. Honouring the spirit of this code will fulfil this vision while enhancing the program quality and the well-being of our student-athletes.

Coaches are expected to be positive representatives of Grace Christian School, their families, and Jesus Christ. Coaches are also to be continually improving their knowledge of the sport being coached.

Coaches should maintain appropriate professional relationships with student-athletes and respect proper coach-student boundaries.

Application to Coach

Coaches are approved by the Athletic Director and Principal of GCS. Any volunteer or staff member working with children at GCS must obtain a criminal records check. This must be completed prior to the first practice.

Pre-Season Responsibilities

Complete all below responsibilities one week before the first scheduled game.

- Create try-out schedule
- Find gym/field availabilities (may consult with Athletic Director)
- Read complete policy manual and sign Coach form
- Receive season schedule from Athletic Director
- Create roster and contact information and jersey numbers – submit one copy to Athletic Director
- Create schedule for practices and games to be given to student-athletes and Athletic Director
- Receive equipment from Athletic Director
- Receive game sheets from Athletic Director
- Choose parent volunteer coaches or student managers, if applicable (with acceptance from Athletic Director)

Other Responsibilities

- Arrange transportation for practices and games (if applicable)
- Recording student-athlete attendance at practices/games
- Submitting game sheets to Athletic Director
- Notifying Athletic Director of changes in schedule
- Notifying Athletic Director of disciplinary issues or game incidents
- Ensuring that equipment is brought to games and practices
- Ensure that all facilities being used are left in the same or better condition than when arrived at
- Not leave a game or practice until every player has been picked up by parents

End of Season Responsibilities

- Return all equipment and uniforms to the Athletic Director within one week after the final game of the season
- Provide the Athletic Director with a list of MVP, Most Improved, and Most Sportsmanlike players along with reasons for each choice

Sportsmanship

In games where we are leading by a large margin, coaches will model Christlike 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 (or team captain) will submit the appropriate game sheet to the Athletic Director the day following a game; coaches must also report to the Athletic Director all occasions they, or a player, receive a yellow card, technical foul, ejection or any other sportsmanship-related penalty.

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Any ejection from a game of a coach due to unsportsmanlike conduct will result in 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

If a player becomes unconscious for any reason or experiences severe dizziness due to head trauma, he may not continue to participate that day and must see a doctor before returning to a future practice or game.

Volunteering

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 criminal records check. Once the results are returned, the volunteer coach may begin working with the team.

Favouritism

Please remember coaches—volunteer or paid—with children of their own on the team, must show no favoritism. If the coach does show consistent favoritism, he will be asked to have a meeting with the Athletic Director.

Student-Athlete Absences

Absences by a Student-Athlete should be tracked consistently.

Equipment

All uniforms and equipment must be returned to the coach within a week of the last game. If a player does not return a uniform, he will be charged to replace it and may not participate in a sport the following season.

Dress

The coach should be dressed appropriately for each sport. GCS-branded clothing is encouraged.

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.

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Athletic Director

ATHLETIC HANDBOOK COACH COMPLIANCE FORM

I have read and understand the rules, regulations and guidelines set forth in this handbook. I agree to abide by these rules, regulations and guidelines and I will faithfully support the coaches, athletic director and administration of Grace Christian School.

Coach's Name (print): _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Athletic Code of Conduct

1. Attendance

- a. All athletes are expected to attend practices and games. For more information, refer to policy manual.
- b. If you are injured, you are expected to attend practice unless you have been excused by your coach.

2. Behavior

- a. Athletes are expected to have a positive attitude both on and off the court or field at all times.
- b. Disrespect to coaches, teachers, fans, teammates, parents, and other students will not be tolerated.
- c. Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. This may include not only words and attitude, but also gestures; verbal language; and body language.
- d. Disruptiveness in the classrooms or during practices or games will not be tolerated.
- e. Students are expected to be positive representatives of Grace Christian School, their families, and Jesus Christ.

3. Consequences

Depending upon the severity of an infraction, students who break the athletic code of conduct may be subject to a range of penalties. At the discretion of the coach or athletic director, consequences may include suspension from games or dismissal from the team.

I have read and understand the rules, regulations and guidelines set forth in this handbook. I agree to abide by these rules, regulations and guidelines and I will faithfully support the coaches, athletic director and administration of Grace Christian School.

Student's Name (print): _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent's Name (print): _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____