

GCS Athletics

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.” Colossians 3:23

GCS typically offers a variety of after-school sports throughout the year which may include some or all of the following: volleyball, basketball, cross country, soccer, baseball and cheerleading. All students are encouraged to explore and participate in sports. In order for students to participate in GCS athletic sports teams, students must be academically eligible and model appropriate behavior. Discipline issues as well as academic issues are grounds for a student to be removed from the team by the Athletic Director or Administration of GCS.

Purpose of Athletics

Middle and high school athletic competitions play an important role in our national culture. It is not uncommon for parents and students to share an interest of participation in sports. Athletics are a vehicle that can be used to foster responsibility and cultivate leadership skills in students. These are qualities that may be taken into consideration when applying to colleges.

Just as in the classroom, GCS is committed to excellence within our athletic department. Concentration will be given towards health, physical development, leadership, perseverance, and integrity in competition.

Athletic Awards

Varsity Letters continue to be the benchmark standard for individual student athlete success for the high school athlete. Grace Christian School is committed to creating a high standard for achievement for earning the Varsity Letter Award. Most of our sports have a very simple formula for awarding Varsity Letters; the student athlete must be a member of the Varsity squad to earn a Varsity Letter. A member of the Varsity squad is defined as participating in at least half of the Varsity games. Practicing with the Varsity, sitting the bench for tournament games, or being "called up" for a few games does not guarantee a Varsity Letter for an athlete. However, there are special exceptions for student athletes which can be made by the Head Coach and approved by the Athletic Director or the Administration. Moreover, some sports have a stronger individual focus and others have more movement between levels and therefore have specified requirements for the Varsity Letter.

In addition, student athletes are reminded that the Varsity Letter is a recognition award determined by the Head Coach in conjunction with the Athletic Director and the Administration. Student athletes who fail to complete a season for any reason other than injury may not letter. In addition, violations of school and individual sport rules may cause a student athlete to be disqualified from earning a Varsity Letter. Finally, playing in a limited amount of Varsity games or practicing with the Varsity is not a guarantee that a student athlete will earn a Varsity Letter.

Athletes are required to demonstrate commitment and regular attendance throughout each season to receive an Athletic Pin at the completion of the season. The head coach has the right to take special circumstances into consideration when determining who will receive an Athletic Pin.

Extenuating circumstances such as injuries, violations of codes and guidelines, etc., will be taken into account. Coaches, however, must provide documentation of these circumstances.

Athletic Awards Night

Each season brings new accomplishments and achievements. At the end of each sports season, the players will have an awards night for their hard work and diligence. Player participation is expected.

The following awards will be awarded during the athletic awards assembly, unless otherwise determined and approved by the Athletic Director:

- Most Valuable Player
- Coach's Award
- Most Improved

Athletic Eligibility

In order for students to participate in extracurricular activities, they must meet the following requirements:

- Be enrolled as a degree seeking GCS student
- Maintaining an overall GPA of 2.0
- Be passing all classes (no F's on report card or most recent interim report)

If an athlete earns an F on a report card or interim report during an athletic season, he/she becomes ineligible to continue participating in the sport until the next report card or interim report is distributed. If the athlete demonstrates academic progress in the failing course following the distribution of the failing report card/interim report, the athlete may continue to attend practices and sit the bench (no playing) during a contest.

Discipline issues and academic issues are grounds for an athlete to be removed from the team by the Athletic Director and Administration of GCS. **Each individual case will be at the discretion of the administration.*

Athletic Fees

The purpose of the sports fee is to provide for the needs of the athletic program. The sports fee is required of all athletes for each sport in which they participate. The sports fees are set aside for coaching, athletic uniforms, athletic transportation, and other athletic purchases. The sports fee is \$125 per season for the first sport and a dual fee of \$75 for each additional sport during a given season. **Please note that all athletic fees are non-refundable.**

Athletic Competitive Teams

All athletic teams at GCS are competitive teams. This means that a commitment is expected from every student and supported by parents. Practices and games are not optional and come before any additional extracurricular activities that the student may also participate in after school. Additionally, as a competitive team, coaches make decisions that will benefit the team's overall success and wins versus individual playing time.

Athletic Examinations

All students who anticipate participation in GCS athletics are required to have a separate sports physical for participation. All athletes who plan to participate must have all the forms listed below:

- *Athletic Physical*
- *Student Athletic Forms*

These are required before an athlete may practice or participate in a particular sport.

Please visit the GCS website at www.grace-school.net under athletics for the necessary forms.

Athletic School Attendance

Athletics is just one aspect of the well-rounded activities that GCS offers. It is imperative that we require our students and athletes to strive for excellence.

- Athletes must be in school or at a school function the day of a contest or practice in order to participate. They must stay in school in order to be eligible to practice or play in the game or competition. Athletes who are absent for more than ½ of the school day are ineligible to participate in after school activities unless prior approval is granted by the Athletic Director.
- Athletes who miss school for sporting events must make up all missed work in the time frame set by the teacher.
- Athletics is an extra-curricular activity which requires an extra commitment to school attendance (please see school attendance section of the GCS handbook for specific requirements).

Athletic Practice Regulations

Practice is very important to an athletic team. This is the time when the team develops unity, teamwork, skills, game strategies and self-discipline. Athletes are expected to place a high priority on practice time and be in attendance at each practice and scheduled game event.

- Whenever there is a practice/game, the athlete will be there unless they have permission from their coach to be absent. Excused absences will be granted for personal sickness, bereavement, and any extenuating situations evaluated by the Athletic Director. Practices missed for work and outside functions will not be excused.
- It is the responsibility for the athlete and parent to notify the coach in writing as far in advance as possible for any absence.
- Doctor appointments should be scheduled outside practice times.
- Players are expected to be on time to each practice and attend the entire practice.
- Tutoring and extra help sessions should not be scheduled during practiced time.
- If an athlete consistently misses practice and/or games, it will be up to the coach and Athletic Director as to whether the player can continue to be a part of the team.

Athletic Dress

Proper Practice Attire

- **No** spandex and/or compressions shorts. However, spandex and/or compression shorts may be worn if underneath athletic shorts.

- Practice shirts should be loose fitting but **cannot** be holey, ripped and/or torn.
- Appropriate shoes.
- All clothing must be free of inappropriate words and implied meanings.
- Coaches will require a player to change if he/she feels proper practice attire is not in accordance to handbook policy.
- Jewelry is not to be worn during practices or games.

Hair

Your hair must be kept out of your eyes. If hair is long, ladies must have their hair in a ponytail and/or headband. Guys **may not** have hair in ponytail or man-bun but may use a headband. Headbands for males and females **may not** be tied in a knot (based on VISAA and VHSL officials' standards).

Game Attire

For sanctioned sports, athletes are provided a shirt and a pair of shorts. Items that may be worn under the shirt and shorts will be based on Coach's decision, along with the GCS Athletic Department. However, it must also, meet the standards of VISAA and VHSL officials' standards. Other items that may be worn are the responsibility of the athlete (for example socks, shoes, etc.) but must fall under the guidelines of the Coach and GCS Athletic Director.

For non-sanctioned sports (club and/or new), athletes will be responsible for buying their team shirt (then, keeping the shirt at the completion of the season). Other items (for example shorts, pants, etc.) will need to be purchased by the athlete but based on the direction and guidelines of the Coach and GCS Athletic Director.

Most of our sports will provide athletic equipment, such as volleyballs or basketballs. However, some of our sports will require our athletes to have their own athletic equipment. Examples are, shin guards for soccer, baseball glove and bat for baseball and/or tennis racket for tennis.

Uniform Care

- Athletes are expected to clean and maintain their own uniforms during the course of the season.
- Athletes will turn in their uniforms and school equipment at the designated time. If a uniform is damaged, lost, or not returned, the athlete will pay for a replacement (this amount will be added to the families' account).

Tattoos

Visible tattoos must be covered during sanctioned and non-sanctioned games/events.

Athletic Transportation

- If there is no gap between the school day and the games or no school that day, school transportation will be provided but parents can take student directly to games if they would like (please communicate this to the coach prior to the game).
- Permission may be granted for a student to travel home with a parent of a child who attends the game.

- Students are not permitted to ride with other students, unless given permission by the Athletic Director, coach, and parents.
- Special arrangements must be made by the parents with the coach according to each specific situation.
- In the absence of school-sponsored transportation to and from games and practices, parents are responsible for students' transportation to and from those events. Neither the coaches nor the Athletic Director are responsible for arranging transportation for a child with another family.
- Coaches are responsible to stay with student-athletes returning from off-campus events until all students have been picked up.
- Failure to pick up athletes at the designated times will result in a late pick-up fee. A five-minute grace period is given. A parent 6-15 minutes late will be charged a \$15 late fee. A parent 16 minutes or later will be charged a \$25 late fee.

Athlete Requirements

- All athletes are required to submit to the Athletic Director a sport physical and the student athletic forms before they may participate on an athletic team.
- Athletes are expected to demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct at all times. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action as determined by the athlete's coach and the Athletic Director.
- Athletes will be required to meet academic eligibility requirements.
- Athletes must be devoted and committed to the team. Quitting is not encouraged and consequences of quitting may include not being eligible to play on future athletic teams.
- Athletes are expected to represent their family, school, and Savior with a Christ-like attitude.
- Athletes receiving multiple detentions may be declared ineligible.

Parent Requirements

- Support GCS and the coaching staff as they train our young people through athletics. If there is a question throughout the season, please go directly to the head coach at a scheduled time (not when the coach is coaching).
- Exemplify the proper attitude in game attendance even when officials make questionable calls.
- Refrain from addressing individual players on the court/field, the coaches or players on opposing teams, or the officials. Failure to abide by this expectation could lead to a parent being asked to leave a game and/or not invited to return to future sporting events.
- Bring any concerns to the coach and athletic director.
- Exemplify a proper attitude at sporting events.
- Follow the guidelines and instructions as listed in this handbook.
- Assist the athletic program by donating, driving, or volunteering to work concessions/admissions.
- Be responsible for the safety and supervision of your own children not involved in athletics during games.

Parent Volunteering for Athletics

As part of the agreement for athletes to join a team, parents are agreeing to support the athletic program by volunteering to work concessions or admissions, donating items to the concessions or team, and/or helping with transportation. Parents must complete the required volunteer forms and submit them to the main office prior serving.

What to Expect from the Coaches

- Leading by example through Christian testimony, word, and action
- Display professional conduct in relationships with administrators, staff, parents, and students
- Issue uniforms, practice schedules, and proper communication
- Maintain discipline at practices, games, and in traveling situations
- Follow the guidelines in the GCS handbook and all rules and policies
- Work directly with the athletic director in the planning and execution of each sport
- Attend the sports awards night given for the sport which they coach

Coaches are selected by the Athletic Director and Administration of GCS and will be evaluated on a yearly basis.

What to Expect From the Athletic Director

- Make sure printed game schedules are provided
- Schedule games and communicate game changes
- Monitor and oversee the use of all athletic equipment
- Oversee the conduct of athletes, parents, and coaches
- Evaluate and enforce academic eligibility
- Encourage school-wide GCS spirit
- Lead and oversee running the day-to-day operations of the athletic and physical education program

Chain of Command

Following the chain of command will help in resolving problems and questions that may arise. If you are unsure of how to contact a coach, please contact the Athletic Office for specific coach's contact information. This handbook, along with the coach's policies will be used as guidelines for resolving problems.

1st contact	Head Coach
2nd contact	Athletic Director
3rd contact	Administration

Standard of Conduct

Grace Christian School is pleased to offer athletic teams. In keeping with the intent and value of Christian School Athletics, we ask that all players, coaches, and spectators maintain exemplary Christian behavior at all times. Those not complying with this request may be approached by the

Administrator, the Athletic Director, or any other GCS personnel and asked to cooperate. Those declining will be asked to leave the premises.

Unsportsmanlike behavior, yellow or red card, and/or technical foul issued to a player or a GCS coach, will result in an immediate meeting, the next school day, with the Athletic Director. If the behavior was from a student athlete, his/her parents will be requested to attend. The consequence of unsportsmanlike behavior by a player or a coach could range from a warning, to suspension, to removal from the team.

Please help make our athletic program enjoyable for everyone. Thank you.